



Finale

ADELINA DE LARA

Foreword by Dame Myra Hess •

Adelina de Lara left my school to-day . . . she will have a great future.' Thus wrote Clara Schumann to Brahms in 1891.

Adelina de Lara, in collaboration with Clare H-Abraham, author of best seller *Prelude*—the early life of Eileen Joyce—unfolds the sequel to this letter of so many years ago.

Now in her 84th year, Madame de Lara has set down for future generations the fruits of her years of experience. Her early struggles as a child prodigy, student-days in Frankfurt, her impressions of Clara Schumann—'most of us kissed her hand after our lessons'—Brahms, Dvorak, Grieg and countless others, one by one, the great of the past live for us again.

Born in Carlisle on 23rd January 1872, Adelina de Lara was taught the piano by her father, George Matthew Tilbury, and from the early age of six became the child prodigy of the era, acknowledged by royalty and critics alike. The tragic death of her parents when she was eight years old left her sole supporter for her sisters and herself.

Then in Birmingham, Adelina de Lara came to the notice of Fanny Davies, who lifted her for ever from the 'child prodigy' to the serious pianist, and one year with Fanny Davies lead to six years' study with Clara Schumann.

To-day Madame de Lara is the sole survivor and guardian of the great tradition of Schumann interpretation. 'For' as the *Manchester Guardian* said in a review of a recent performance, 'Madame de Lara was

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In collaboration with
CLARE H-ABRAHALL

BURKE

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Contents

	<i>Foreword by Dame Myra Hess</i>	page ix
Chapter 1	<i>A Far Cry from Clara Schumann</i> ..	page 11
2	<i>Tragedy</i>	21
3	<i>Clara Schumann</i>	31
4	<i>Frankfurt-on-Main and Serious Study</i>	40
5	<i>Brahms and the Teaching of Clara Schumann</i> ..	48
6	<i>Travels and More Famous Musicians</i>	61
7	<i>I Begin my Career</i>	74
8	<i>The Fruits of Success</i>	81
9	<i>The First Cloud</i>	91
10	<i>Marriage</i>	102
11	<i>A Ship That Nearly Foundered</i>	110
12	<i>The Unfortunate Parting</i>	120
13	<i>Roses, Roses All the Way</i>	126
14	<i>An Unpleasant and a Pleasant Experience</i> ..	132
15	<i>Strange Influence</i>	137
16	<i>Lily Langtry</i>	148.
17	<i>No More Concertos</i>	154
18	<i>Sadness and My First World War</i>	166
19	<i>First Broadcast</i>	178
20	<i>Dame Ethel Smyth, Eileen Joyce and Others</i> ..	185
21	<i>A Broken Ankle and Another War</i>	192
22	<i>I Play with Dame Myra Hess</i>	200
23	<i>Farewell</i>	213

Illustrations

Adelina de Lara	Frontispiece
The author at the age of eight	<i>facing page</i> 32
The author and Bert Priestley	32
George Hope Johnstone •	33
Sir Landon Ronald	33
Robert Schumann	48
Clara Schumann : •	48
Antonin Dvůrak	49
Johannes Brahms . • . . .	49
The author at the age of twenty-four	96
Grieg and his wife, Nina	96
The <i>Queen</i> , April 1892	97
A letter from Clara Schumann	112
A concert programme: the Steinway Hall, March 1895	113
Thomas Kingston	128
Lily Langtry and Thomas Kingston	128
A letter from Caruso	129
Sir Adrian Boult	144
Dame Myra Hess	145
Eileen Joyce	176
<i>Shalimar</i> , the author's house near Boulogne	177
The author's sitting-room in her cottage	177
Programme of the author's last concert,	192
The author broadcasting in <i>Music Magazine</i>	193
The author appearing in a Television Programme	193

Foreword

MADAME ADELINA DE LARA has given us a most delightful book, full of the enchantment of the great days that are past, and at the same time showing us the vital personality which makes her so much a part of the present day.

She is one of the last direct links with Clara Schumann and she can speak with authority about her, and the circle of great musicians who were her friends. One feels that, as the traditions of the past live again in Madame de Lara's playing, so through the pages of her autobiography we see everyone with whom she came in contact in their true light as living people.

Her life has not been easy, but one can see throughout the story how her indomitable courage and sense of humour turned all difficulties towards the construction of that musical achievement and integrity which we know so well.

MYRA HESS



A Far Cry from Clara Schumann

I WAS BORN at Carlisle, Cumberland, on January 23rd in the year 1872. My parents had each been married before. My father, George Matthew Tilbury of Southampton, already had one son. My mother, Anna, was the youngest of the four daughters of David Laurent de Lara, the son of the Spanish Count Laurent de Lara; he married my maternal grandmother, a Polish Jewess of the name of Cracour, that of an important Polish military family who lived in Cracow, in the part of Poland then under Austrian rule. My mother already had two daughters and I was the only child of her second union.

I have pleasant recollections of my grandfather, for he was gentle and kindly, but my grandmother terrified me. I can see her now, with her corkscrew curls, her long beaky nose, black eyes, and worst of all, her bad temper.

Of my mother I speak with pride; as a girl she was very beautiful and a good singer. Wilhelm Ganz, Adelina Patti's accompanist, has often delighted me with stories of her. It appears that she spoiled a brilliant career by running away from home when only sixteen, to marry a solicitor named Laurence. It ended in disaster, for he took to drink, treated her badly and finally left her destitute. One of my most valued possessions is a miniature

. *Finale*

of her, painted on ivory when she was nine years old. It was shown at the Great Exhibition of 1851, where she sang to Queen Victoria.

How my parents met I do not know. One of my earliest recollections of my father is of sitting on his knee when he played tunes on an old harmonium. I could only have been about two-and-a-half, but I can still see the room, with French windows opening on to a garden in Shepherd's Bush—and my father, his blue eyes twinkling at me, with his flowing Dundreary whiskers and big moustache. He was very handsome and, I think, knew it, but there was always some mystery about him. He called himself Preston for some reason, spoke several languages and often conversed with my mother in Italian. Father played many instruments and had a beautiful baritone voice. He would sing with mother such duets as *La Ci Darem*. On Sundays, when I went to bed early, I used to listen to them, and cry myself to sleep.

By profession my father was also an engraver and illuminator and gave Hubert Herkomer, the painter, his first lesson in etching. We seemed to travel about a lot visiting most of the big towns, and there was an endless number of lodgings to which we went, some good, some bad, according to the state of my father's finances. But wherever we went, however poor we were, there was always a piano, for by then my father had decided I was to play professionally, and nothing was allowed to stand in the way of my practising. I was kept at it for hours on end, and when I was permitted to stop, I had to turn to learning astronomy and Italian, drawing and reading. Apart from this, I never entered a school or had any other education. No childish pursuits were mine; I never had any toys or went for walks, and I was always up until very late at night.

At times we were so poor that there was nothing to eat, and when that happened our lives centred upon the postman's knock. Somewhere in a vague land called "Harley Street" it appeared

I possessed a rich aunt. In my small mind she became the "fairy godmother" of all fairy tales—for from her, at the height of our hunger, would come a registered envelope, out of which would roll five gold sovereigns. When this happened we all became very excited and hugged each other, and mother would buy a wonderful dinner and we would eat again. Soon after that we would move on and perhaps father would sell his engravings and things would be better. Wherever we went, a huge bird-cage made by my father and christened "The Crystal Palace" went with us, for father had a passion for his canaries and would not leave them behind.

It was when I was six-and-a-half that we came to Staffordshire and there made friends with some kind people who kept an hotel at Basford.

I loved going there, mostly on Sundays which became red-letter days to me. It was there I first learnt to play chess; not only that, it was perhaps the first step in the career which one day was to be mine.

'Would you like to hear my little girl play the piano?' I can hear my father's voice, even now, with its half-concealed pride.

Polite agreement followed, and father soon had me seated at the piano; yet even he looked surprised at the sudden enthusiasm which my efforts called forth from our host and hostess.

'But the child should be heard by others!' Too young to realize exactly what their approval meant, I remember a little thrill of excitement, and that suddenly they were all talking about me. It was obvious I had 'been rather clever'. Naturally I began to show off, and was promptly whisked away to bed by my mother.

The outcome of this was my very first concert. Most exciting of all to me were my new clothes for the occasion, a blue cashmere frock and white openwork socks. Obediently, I played what my father told me and became slightly embarrassed and

. *Finale*

overwhelmed by the clapping and kissing which resulted. Again I began to feel rather important, and perhaps this is why two years elapsed before my next concert.

We were in Liverpool when my next opportunity arose. Two concerts were announced, with money prizes for competitors. The first was for people of all ages, playing any instrument, the second for children under twelve playing the piano.

Nothing daunted, my father entered me for both. The judging was by the votes of the audience and we each wore a number as we played. I often wonder if I were nervous, but it was too long ago to remember. All that I know is that I played from memory Thalberg's *Home Sweet Home* with variations, and won second prize for the first entry, and first for the children under twelve. This time I was permitted to be a little pleased with myself.

'We will make you a pianist yet,' my father said when I bade him goodnight, hugging me specially tight that evening.

'I am one now!' I replied, with the consummate conceit of youth; and left him with all the dignity a six-and-a-half-year-old could muster.

It was at this stage that my parents apparently decided to concentrate upon my musical career. For the first time, perhaps, they realized they had a breadwinner in the family. My mother and half-sisters turned to making me frocks, and my father became my constant companion at the piano. My memory was good; he taught me to use it and so add to my repertoire.

As time went on, there were frequent talks between my parents of getting me an engagement.

'But she is too young—she is only a baby,' my mother argued.

'My dear—we have got to live!' My father clinched the argument; there was no more to be said.

A few days later, clinging tightly to his hand, I visited a music shop and here a further argument ensued.

'So this is the young lady—small, isn't she?' The proprietor looked at me kindly.

'Yes, but she makes up for that in her playing,' father replied.

'Well, she won't make up for anything with an English name. What are you going to do about it?'

'She could use her mother's——' Father sounded a little doubtful, as if loath that I should surrender his.

'Being what?'

'de Lara.'

'That's it—that's fine. Mademoiselle Adelina de Lara—what more do you want?'

The man really sounded excited. So much so that I felt it, and well pleased with myself, I left the shop, which I had entered as plain Adeline Preston, as "Mademoiselle Adelina de Lara".

Soon after this I was engaged to give piano recitals at a wax-works' gallery in Liverpool, a kind of Madame Tussaud's, at a salary of four pounds a week. I played on a raised platform from three to five-thirty and from eight to ten o'clock. The piano—I can still remember it—was a Hagspiel Grand, and I played everything from memory. I must have presented a strange little spectacle, for according to a photograph I still have I was a solemn child, very thin, all eyes, with masses of dark hair reaching to my waist. Father prevented it from falling over my face by fastening it with a rope of pearls from shoulder to shoulder.

I always had to carry a stiff little bouquet in lace paper and, together with a lace handkerchief, had to place them on the left hand side of the piano before I began to play.

The Directors of the Gallery were a Mr and Mrs Charles Reynolds and, fortunately for me, most delightful people. Their son, Alfred Reynolds, became a composer. They made my performance a feature and it began to draw crowds. One frightening Easter Monday I was made to drive slowly all round Liverpool

Finale

by myself in a carriage drawn by six horses. I carried a bouquet and was dressed in a little white cloak, with a white satin bonnet tied under my chin.

This was done to advertise the "marvellous child pianist" but I remember how I hated it, and longed for the shielding arms of my mother. Of course the people crowded in to hear me after that. They brought me presents and sweets, and once a naval man sent me a gold watch. He even offered to have me trained at Leipzig, but my parents would not hear of it. I was then too young to appreciate such an offer! By this time my salary had been raised to five pounds a week, which was very good for those days. Time passed, not unpleasantly. A tour was arranged for me and I travelled all over the United Kingdom, finally returning to Liverpool. Sometimes my child mind must have exerted itself—I must have longed to be free as other children, but even at that age my responsibilities became real to me. It was obvious even to my tender years that as a family we were living better, and that if I stopped playing the old anxiety of the "registered letters" might begin again.

I have a very clear memory of the great blizzard of '81, which raged for three days. I was taken to the hall by my father in a cab. It was snowing very hard, but I had to appear, and five people were present. I played through my two-hours' recital, my fingers numb with cold. At last it came to an end and when we left the snow lay in great drifts along the streets. My father managed to bribe the driver of a four-wheeler with a sovereign to drive us to the bottom of Mount Pleasant, where we lived. Wrapped in a great red-and-black striped shawl my mother had knitted for me, father carried me the rest of the way. How he did it in such a blizzard I shall never know.

Reading over some old press notices of 1882 I realize now that gradually I must have begun to make an impression. The *Leeds*

Mercury and *Harrogate Advertiser* were pleased to notice me, but I shall let the *Manchester Guardian* speak for itself:

“The greatest interest has been excited by the recital of Mademoiselle de Lara, an astonishing pianist of ten years. Her playing, which is entirely from memory, is of the most remarkable character.”

The critic of the *Chester Chronicle* was even more encouraging:

‘We must devote a special paragraph to the performance of a charming little puss, Mademoiselle Lottie Adelina de Lara. This child is really a musical phenomenon. At the piano, in her recitals which have excited the greatest interest, not only amongst the general public of Chester, but also amongst its professional musicians, she was a perfect little mistress of the instrument. The feats of musical memory performed by this little one were nothing less than marvellous. Without a note before her, she sat down to the piano and went through a lengthy programme, comprising pieces bristling with great difficulties; but the little pianist, without the slightest apparent effort, and at the same time without the slightest trace of self-demonstration or affectation, gave each composition with a flow and rhythm and delicacy of touch which would be the envy of performers who have practised laboriously for years. Not merely, however, was there manual dexterity and lissomeness of fingers, not merely did the notes ripple from beneath her tiny touch, sparkling and liquid as the wavelets of a brook dancing beneath summer sunshine, there was, further, that intelligence of the inner meaning of good music, which endows the playing of the pianoforte with a special charm, and raises it above the level of mere mechanical reproduction. How the little lady manages to find all the power

Finale

she exerts with those tiny arms and delicate digits, is a marvel.'

One of my most delightful memories is of the day I went to Ruthin Castle, the home of Major and Mrs Cornwallis West. I was playing in Wrexham and was invited to give a recital at the Castle. I was intensely excited at the thought of visiting a real castle, but the experience was wholly overshadowed by the mysteries of a poached egg for tea! Never had I tasted anything so marvellous!

It was my chief topic of conversation for weeks. Oddly enough, years later I discovered Eileen Joyce had been equally delighted with poached eggs when she first came to England!

I was almost disloyal to my poached egg, however, when I saw Mrs Cornwallis West! I had never seen anyone so beautiful or so gracious, and her husband was equally kind. Of the recital itself the *Wrexham Advertiser* gives this account. Dated September 2nd, 1882, it reads:

'By the kindness of Major and Mrs Cornwallis West little Mademoiselle Lottie Adelina de Lara, the marvellous child pianist only ten years of age, gave her most wonderful piano-forte recital at the Castle on Saturday afternoon. The drawing room was most kindly placed at her disposal for the afternoon and there, on a dais, this child of ten summers rendered upon Mrs Cornwallis West's grand piano before a large audience pieces by Schuloff, Chopin, Handel, Wagner, Liszt and Mendelssohn. The performance lasted two hours and was played entirely from memory; she played the most difficult pieces not only without a single mistake, but with the skilled expression and a display of power of execution which would have been remarkable in a much older person. Amongst the company we found Mr John Thomas (Pencerdd Gwalia), Her Majesty's talented harpist, who, with several other

musical critics, most heartily congratulated the youthful artiste after a most enjoyable treat.'

These press cuttings, written in a style so typical of seventy years ago, make strange reading now.

I remember my father was very pleased at my success. He fussed about in a long tight overcoat, carrying a top hat. Everything about him seemed long, including his whiskers. In contrast, my mother was tiny and her black hair looked lovely under a large white felt hat with a blue velvet ribbon and an ostrich feather—I had seen it many times before, but I still thought it a glorious hat.

After many more wanderings, we were back in Liverpool and I was again plodding away at my two daily recitals—now at six pounds a week. I fancy the novelty was wearing off, for the crowds were thinning.

I played at bazaars in St George's Hall, where I met some of the great of those days: Mr and Mrs Palgrave Simpson, the Countess of Sefton, and Mr Runciman. Mr Palgrave Simpson invited me to play at his house, and there I played before Sir Julius Benedict, the famous Victorian pianist and composer. He was very old then, as also was Mr Palgrave Simpson, but they both had beautiful young wives and babies.

At one of the bazaars I witnessed a most lovely thing, which I have never seen since. It was a game of chess played by living people. There was a giant chess-board on the floor of the great hall. Pawn would fight pawn with drawn sword until they fell, and when the Queen was in check the Bishop or Knight, as the case might be, bowed low, and then she would walk away in stately grace while the band played a march. There was great pomp and circumstance and the sounding of fanfares as the game of chess was played and the players called the moves. My childish

Finale

'mind revelled in the gorgeous costumes of knights, rooks and pawns. I loved the crowns on the heads of the young Kings and Queens, and knowing the game as I did I was able to follow it. Who knows?—perhaps it was the forerunner of Ninette de Valois' ballet *Checkmate*.

About that time I had another interesting experience. I spent a day on the old paddle steamship *The Great Eastern* which was lying in the Liverpool docks. It had been launched in 1858 and was at that time the largest vessel afloat.



• *Tragedy*

IN January 1883 tragedy entered my life, and for the first time I was brought face to face with sorrow, trouble and death.

My father was an excitable man in many ways and at times gave way to violent tempers. I think the strain and worry of dragging the family round the country must at times have tried him very hard. Fortunately, mother was quiet and gentle and simply worshipped him. By this time my half-sisters were about sixteen and eighteen. Penelope, or Pen as we called her, was the younger, and played the violin. Helen, called Nellie, was domesticated. She also helped father with his engravings, and she disliked "company" or social life. Pen, on the other hand, loved parties. She was a bit of a day-dreamer, which made my father a little impatient. He was full of energy and dynamic power himself and could not bear idleness in others.

My father's son, George de Lara, known later as a comedian, a composer of light songs and a producer, also lived with us. I do not remember him very well in those days, although in his old age he lived with me and died only recently. Unfortunately he ran away in his teens to marry an actress, which enraged my father. My mother tried to pour oil upon troubled waters, but to no avail. George, however, took it all in good part—he respected

Finale

my father. He often came to see us with his wife when he was touring on the stage. In those days times were hard for him, but soon he began to make money and toured all over the Empire, retiring only a few years ago after producing Bernard Shaw's plays for the popular manager Charles Macdona.

My father must have realized my salary would not be raised again, and he turned his mind to his engravings, going out in all weathers to obtain orders. Like '81, the winter of '83 was a particularly hard one, with keen winds and snow, and one day he returned home and collapsed. I knew he was ill, but returned too late from the Gallery each evening to see him. Then one morning I was sitting a little disconsolately in the sitting-room when the doctor walked in, a smiling, kindly person.

Suddenly my mother hurried in and to my horror flung herself on her knees at his feet. Tears were streaming down her cheeks, and I can still remember her words.

'You must save him, Doctor. I will give you a hundred pounds—if only he is saved.'

I was awestruck. Child as I was, I knew we had not a hundred pounds—I had to work hard enough to bring in six, yet there was my mother offering a mythical hundred! My eyes met Pen's as she came into the room; I suppose even then I did not realize how seriously ill my father was.

* Very gently the doctor raised my mother from the floor and put her on the couch, and I tried pathetically to comfort her. That night my father died of pneumonia, at the age of only forty-three.

While my sisters smothered themselves in black crepe I still went on playing at the Gallery, for money had to be made. They did not dress me in black, and I still wore my cerise satin, blue silk or emerald green velvet. I was taken in to see my father lying in his coffin. To a highly strung child it was a severe shock.

Instead of explaining that my father was still near us in spirit, free from the world's struggles and sorrows, they said nothing. My vivid imagination tortured me, the crepe and waxen flowers, the black plumes of the horses weighed me down, and still I had to play. It was a cruel ordeal for a child of ten.

My mother was quite inconsolable. Nothing would rouse her. I can still see the sitting-room where she lay on a hard horse-hair sofa, a pillow under her head and curtains half drawn across the windows, for she would not see the sun outside, nor open her eyes even to greet us. Day after day she lay there, motionless and silent. In vain Pen tried to make her eat, begged even to undress her—for those were the days of tight corsets. Childlike, I did not realize the gravity of her reaction. Nowadays it would not be possible for this to happen; something would have been done to bring back her strength, to give her the will to live. Each day through under-nourishment she became weaker and weaker. Each day, returning from my recitals I would slip in to see her, hoping that perhaps now she had finished "sleeping", that the old welcome would await me. But I was never to know that welcome again. Too late Nellie and Pen became aware that something must be done and a second doctor was sent for, who insisted that she should be given brandy. Perhaps had it been done sooner her heart would have responded; as it was, the stimulant was long overdue, and exactly a week after my father, mother died of heart failure. •

Desolate and inconsolable, we tried to face the future, to survive this double tragedy. Added to my grief came the fear that there was no one to look after us any longer. I would lie awake and listen to Nellie sobbing in the room next to mine. The burden which had become hers, I did not fully realize. As the eldest, she must have worried and sought for a way to make a home for us both. I was the only wage-earner; Pen and she had no

Finale

means of support. In those days it was not considered "the thing" for young ladies to work, nor were there jobs available.

Our thoughts turned to our Harley Street aunt, mother's sister, Hannah Russell. She was the mother of the late Sir Landon Ronald, and her husband, Henry Russell, was the composer of *Cheer, Boys, Cheer* and *A Life on the Ocean Wave*. She wired that owing to neuralgia she could not come. Somehow she could not have understood our plight, and when later I came to know and love her I realized that. Instead she sent us half a sovereign! It helped, —and I still had to play at the Gallery. Perhaps it was as well, as it took my mind off my loneliness.

Nellie looked after us, but she became more and more silent. It was a terrible responsibility for so young a girl. I was not too strong; if my money failed we had exactly nothing.

'You and Pen would be better off without me.'

I was too young to heed the warning in those words, and to understand the brooding which must have been going on in her mind. All I know is that one day Pen and I returned from the Gallery to find our supper left ready, but no Nellie. On the table we found father's silver watch and my mother's wedding ring. This alarmed us and we consulted the landlady.

'She went out about nine—crying all day she was—I was proper worried.'

We were frightened then, for once or twice Nellie had threatened to drown herself. We called in the police and, huddled together, we sat up all night terrified of what they might find.

Our worst fears were fulfilled. Nellie had been seen last at about nine-fifteen by two or three people, walking very fast towards the docks, her face noticeably white and stricken. The police also discovered that the day before she had been making enquiries about the outgoing tides. The tide went out that night

at nine-thirty,—the hour and day exactly a fortnight after my father died. Her death was presumed.

There was no doubt she had drowned herself, for everything was done to find her alive or dead. She had left all her belongings behind—even her purse with silver in it on the dressing table. As a child I felt but a temporary and rather exciting sadness, but as I grew older, how often have I dwelt with deep sorrow upon this tragedy!

It was the naval commander who seemed to goad Pen to action. He once again renewed his offer to send me to Leipzig. Pen, however, was quite a business woman; she refused, and wrote to a manager who had already heard me play. The answer was most favourable, and soon I had a number of bookings.

During the next two years I appeared at the Art Gallery, Newcastle, giving recitals twice daily, the Picture Galleries at York and the Brighton Aquarium. It was here I played a concerto by Mendelssohn with the orchestra, conducted by Monsieur Jacques Greebe, with whom I fell madly in love. I played also at the Devonshire Park Orchestral Concerts at Eastbourne conducted by Julian Adams, mostly Mendelssohn and all by memory. Pen would arrange the programmes, and used to write out pieces for the following Monday which I had not yet learnt; I cannot think how I did it. I do not remember *learning to read music at all*. I am convinced I knew it when I was born, and that it was a remembrance of a former incarnation.

There was a charming singer, Clara Samuel, who sang at the concerts. She wore a little blue velvet bonnet, white kid gloves, and sang in the sweetest way *My Mother Bids Me Bind My Hair*. I used to gaze at her in rapture from the wings!

It was at the Aquarium that I heard *Carmen* for the first time, and how thrilled I was by this glorious opera. It was sung on that occasion by Emily Soldene and conducted by Jacques Greebe.

Finale

The time came for me to leave Brighton and I wrote a touching little farewell to the object of my devotions whom I had loved "silently" and "sorrowfully". I hope if Jacques Greebe is still alive he will not mind if he reads this! Pen and I then went to Eastbourne where we stayed with an aunt and uncle while I fulfilled my engagements at Devonshire Park. For the first time I was really happy, for my cousins Henry and Landon Ronald arrived to hear me play. We went for walks and enjoyed the sea air, and I really was able to relax and be my age.

One aunt leads to another! Quite unexpectedly our eldest aunt, who had hitherto ignored us, now asked Pen and me to stay with her in London. She was the widow of a well-to-do barrister whom she had nagged so much in his lifetime that, when he was run over by a tram and killed, it was found he had left all his money to his two sisters, leaving his wife, son and daughter destitute. It was aunt Russell of Harley Street who came to the rescue and put her into a house in Notting Hill, where she lived lavishly by taking paying guests.

The night Pen and I arrived a dinner party was being prepared and there was an exciting feeling of social activity. I was awed by the presence of an Army captain, one of the paying guests, resplendent in his uniform. Rose, my cousin, a few years older than I, was dressed in a brilliant cerise satin dress. Auntie, like my Polish grandmother, had a hooked nose, flashing black eyes, and was very tiny. I was most impressed by the ornate cap covered in flowers she wore upon her head, and the fan which hung at her waist as a reminder that she had once held a high social position.

I soon discovered that my aunt had a wonderful sense of humour and she kept me in fits of laughter. Unfortunately I was not so impressed with her high soprano voice, with which she would render, all out, Tosti's *Good-bye*. The Captain seemed to like it, however, and would encourage her to sing, while he in turn

practised mesmerism upon us all. He would look hard at each of us in turn, crinkling up his tiny eyes, until one by one we fell asleep, or pretended to. Although I did not know it, he was to change the pattern of my life. I suppose he found young girls amusing, and we were finally asked to stay with his mother at their house in Brighton.

So once again we found ourselves back there and I accepted a re-engagement at the Aquarium. I think the Captain must have been struck by my reception, for he offered to give me an introduction to a Mr and Mrs Hill of Birmingham, where I had a later engagement. Little suspecting the wonderful vista it was to open, we accepted. First I had to return to London to play at Piccadilly Hall, now a place of the past. I had been engaged by some people who lived in one of the first London flats in Regent's Park. For some reason, I imagined the artificial light by which they lived, as it was a basement flat, was a sign of great culture, and I was most impressed!

One morning I came down to breakfast to an atmosphere of great excitement. I had been commanded to play at Marlborough House!

'Think of it, Adelina—before Royalty!'

Pen's eyes were glowing with excitement and I conjured up visions of crowns and long trains and golden thrones, not unlike the chess game I had seen in Liverpool. Of course there was a great to-do about getting me suitably dressed, and when the day arrived I wore a white brocade satin frock.

'You must walk up to the Princess of Wales and curtsy.'

What hours I spent practising that!

'Do not turn your back on her. You must retire backwards!'

'You must not play until you are asked.'

With such instructions ringing in my head, I was at last in the cab and on my way.

Finale

As I was ushered in, great double doors were flung open before me. Quite undaunted, I trotted in all by myself. The room was crowded, there must have been about three hundred guests. My eyes were fixed upon a beautiful lady in a black velvet dress decorated with little red half-moons. She wore white kid gloves. I curtsied very low, then firmly held out my hand, quite unaware it was not the thing to do! Her Royal Highness took it kindly, and the Prince of Wales smiled at me.

I was asked to play and there was a general move to the piano. The Prince and Princess of Wales seated themselves on the right-hand side of the piano. Prince George, later King George V, with his sisters the Princesses Louise, Victoria and Maud (who became Queen of Norway) were on the left. I think I played my very best: Mendelssohn's *Rondo. Capriccioso*, followed by an *Impromptu* by Chopin—all from memory.

When I finished, the Princess of Wales called me to her.

'Tell me, Adelina, are you related to Mr Laurent de Lara?'

'Yes, ma'am, he was my grandfather.'

I was rather disconcerted when the voice of Miss Knollys, one of the ladies-in-waiting, told me to speak up as Her Royal Highness was deaf. I felt it was rude to raise my voice, but I did so, feeling a little flushed. I repeated my statement, and this time the Princess smiled.

'I remember him well,' she said.

'And how many pieces do you play from memory, my dear?' the Prince of Wales broke in.

'Two hundred, sir,' I smiled up at him. At this he gave a low whistle, which delighted me.

After a few more questions, the Princess suddenly rose, placed her hand on the Prince's arm, bowed to me, and walked down the room and out of the great doors, as we all curtsied low. The reception was over. An usher escorted me to a small room where

tea was laid. I found myself the centre of a group of ladies, which included the three Princesses, all dressed alike in grey tailored costumes. Prince George handed me cakes, and I think I ate a very big tea. All too soon it was over.

After that things began to move fast. I toured Scotland and Ireland and finally returned to Brighton, again staying with the Captain and his mother, Mrs Hughes. I loved their house and remember Pen at breakfast each morning in a white cashmere dressing-gown trimmed with swansdown, her lovely auburn hair in thick plaits. I knew she was in love with the Captain, but he seemed to prefer talking to me. I was a safe age!

At last the time came to move on to Birmingham, and so, armed with a letter from the Captain to Mr and Mrs Hill, we bade our farewells and left with regret. The Hills were more than kind to me and once Mrs Hill had heard me play she said a friend of hers, a Mrs Priestley, must hear me. I thanked her without enthusiasm, little realizing it was to be the turning point in my career.

I think I was reaching the stage when I knew I was playing badly. I used to get weary and bored, tired of learning new pieces. I was, I expect, quite worn out and I plodded through my recitals at the Art Gallery.

Then, one day, I played before Mr and Mrs Priestley, of Rogers and Priestley, Music Warehouse, Colmore Row, on a magnificent Bechstein Grand. The Priestleys were obviously impressed.

'You must play for Mr and Mrs Johnstone.'

'Oh, dear,' I thought. 'Will this never end?'

However, like a good child, I found myself doing as I was requested. I perked up somewhat when I found that I was to play in a trio. Mr Priestley had two sons, one a violinist, the other a 'cellist. I had never played in an ensemble in my life; we chose the Gade *Trio* which I read at sight. We followed it up with a Mendelssohn *Trio*. I must have played badly, but the first faint

Finale

tremor of excitement stirred in me. I was no longer bored, I became alive—interested; there was new fire in my playing, everyone looked surprised. That night decided my future.

It so happened that the well-known pianist Fanny Davies had just returned from Germany, where she had been studying with Clara Schumann in Frankfurt-on-Main. The Priestleys decided to take me along to a musical evening when they were to play with her. For the first time in my life I heard really good music, except for the occasion when once as a tiny girl my parents had taken me to hear Sir Charles and Lady Hallé.

I sat enthralled listening first to the quartet—Brahms' *G Minor*—and then to Fanny Davies as she played Schumann's *Symphonic Studies*. I could not believe the piano; it was a revelation.

To this day her magnificent playing, so brilliant, yet so refined, the perfect phrasing and technique remains in my memory. I was humbled as I had never been before. For days afterwards I lived in a state of despair at my own shortcomings. I longed desperately to play as she did and I wished with all my heart that someone would teach me, and that I had the money to learn.

On the following Sunday I was taken to the beautiful house of Mr and Mrs Johnstone in Hamstead, Birmingham, and after lunch was asked to play. The grand piano was at one end of the large room, and at the other end one saw the gardens through the French windows. I played with the frustration of disappointed youth. It was Schumann's *D Major Novelette*, and perhaps some of my longing crept into it—all I know is that when I finished a girl rushed up to me, all eyes, glowing with intelligence and interest. I was swept into her embrace and heard six glorious words, the full meaning of which for the moment I could not comprehend.

'You must go to Madame Schumann!' she cried. That girl was Fanny Davies.



Clara Schumann

THE APPROVAL of Fanny Davies lifted me once and for all from the child prodigy class to which, up till then, I suppose I had belonged. Truly musical people had, I think, marvelled at my ability to play as I did, forgiving my technique or lack of it, for my ear was true and I had been well grounded by my father. Now, however, they looked at me with added interest. If Fanny Davies, who was taking London by storm, and had so lately returned from Clara Schumann, could quite seriously say that I, a mere child, must go to Clara Schumann, then something had to be done about it.

Fanny Davies talked to me seriously as soon as she had the opportunity.

‘You must give up all this child prodigy playing, Adelina. Soon you will not be a child and have to compete with grown-ups, and then what?’

‘I know—when I listened to you I—I felt lost.’

‘Silly child, there is no need for that. I think you are found, Adelina—if Clara Schumann would take you, you would be the luckiest girl in the world. She is a great teacher. She will make you play as you want to play. I know you are not satisfied.’

Finale.

'I hate it! I hate to play wrongly, but you see there . . . never has been any money to learn with.'

Suddenly, adolescent as I was, I found I could talk to her. Here was someone who understood, who would not think I was being disloyal to my father and to all those who had helped me as a "child prodigy". For the first time the musician in me cried out before this woman, whose playing had so humbled me.

'If you really feel like that, a way will be found. Don't you worry! But it's hard work, Adelina, and a lonely profession.'

'I've always had to work.'

'Yes, you poor child. I think you have.'

Being only thirteen, I did not realize at the time the sensation her interest in me had caused. Backed by the Priestleys and Johnstones, the leading citizens of Birmingham soon became interested in my story, among them Joseph Chamberlain and Phipson Beale of Edgbaston, who subscribed generously. Gradually, then gaining momentum, the money for my musical education began to come in. From hundreds of pounds it mounted up to thousands, and then plans began to be made.

I was to have a year with Fanny Davies in London to prepare me for an audition with Clara Schumann! I could not take it all in at first; instead of blindly playing, I was to be taught, taught all the things I now longed to know, and above all I was to go to Fanny Davies herself. I lived in a kind of dream. The importance of Clara Schumann had not quite impressed itself upon my mind; for the moment all that mattered was I was going to Fanny Davies, and Pen was to come with me to look after me. To crown my happiness, we were to go as paying guests to aunt Russell! I, who for so long had never had a home or security, was to have both at last.

I no longer had to rush from town to town, from lodging to lodging. No more sitting up late until my eyes were heavy with



This photograph was taken
when I was playing in Liverpool;
I was eight years old.

I became engaged to
Bert Priestley when I
was still only sixteen.



George Hope Johnstone
(*right*) helped to arrange
my tuition with Fanny
Davies and Clara Schu-
mann.



My cousin Landon
Ronald (*left*) became
a life-long friend.

sleep. No more playing all day, learning pieces in a hurry. Instead, I had good meals at regular intervals, an atmosphere of culture, and above all my own kith and kin around me. To cap it all, my musical training had begun.

I did not even know how to finger the C scale when I had my first lesson, but Fanny Davies found me quick and eager to take advantage of her teaching. No more "faking" of scales and smearing of passages. It was glorious to play slow techniques knowing that at last I was playing in the right way.

I made great friends with my cousin Landon Ronald and his brother Henry. Landon was then at the Royal College of Music learning to play the piano and violin under Sir Hubert Parry and Villiers Stanford; but when he was supposed to be practising he spent most of the time using his bow to play with the cat. How cross auntie used to get with him! There were times however when he would work very hard, and I remember the time we stood to win a gold sovereign from my uncle Henry Russell, of whom I was in great awe. We never were allowed to sit in his chair or look at the daily paper before him. He was much older than my aunt; he had been married before and had two sons by his first wife, one of whom was Clark Russell, who later became an author. Uncle Henry was passionately fond of the Overture to *William Tell* and he promised Landon and me a reward the day we could play it as a duet.

How we slaved at it! We laughed and quarrelled and plodded on, planning to put our skill to the test on uncle's birthday. We both knew how critical he was, and when the actual day arrived we were a mass of nerves and excitement and could hardly speak to each other.

Landon had a great sense of rhythm even as a boy, and so had I, which was fortunate, for *William Tell* calls for it, working up to a terrific finale.

Finale

Uncle sat in his chair, all attention, as we took our places at the piano and off we started. Soon we were playing for dear life in such a rhythmical manner that we were nudging and banging each other's elbows in our excitement and energy. I can imagine our flushed faces and eager eyes as we finished, both wondering if we had won our reward. We did not have to wait long. Uncle's heavy applause told us he was delighted.

'Upon my word, never have I seen a sovereign better earned!'

Out it came from the sovereign case which looked like a gold watch and hung on his watch chain. How we thanked him, and how pleased we were! Not till many years later did I ponder upon the word "seen", and not "heard".

My aunt used to dress my cousins in black velvet with lace collars and cuffs! They looked like the Princes in the Tower. Later, when they were promoted to Eton suits and top hats, we used to have great fun in the park during the London "season".

We would walk in Rotten Row and I would bow to the people in the smartest carriages and my cousins would doff their hats. In return we would receive gracious bows from the ladies who thought we must be children of friends of theirs! We were especially delighted when the carriage of the Prince and Princess of Wales with the three Princesses swept past. We would salute them respectfully and as a reward we would receive a most radiant smile and bow from the Princess of Wales.

All too soon those carefree months slipped by, and I had to intensify my study. Lady Thompson, the wife of the great surgeon Sir Henry Thompson and daughter of Edward Loder, of violin fame, to whom I was introduced by Fanny Davies, gave me harmony lessons and helped me with German. She warned me that soon Clara Schumann would be in England, that she spoke no English and I would have to understand German if I

studied with her. Of course I was seized with panic and redoubled my efforts.

'What is she like?' I ventured to ask Fanny Davies during one lesson.

'What is *who* like?'

'Clara Schumann.'

I think my voice must have sounded hushed and scared. Somehow I could not picture this great teacher of whom everyone spoke with awe—secretly I had built up in my mind somebody rather frightening.

'Very regal.'

'Like the Princess of Wales?'

'No—not quite. How can I describe her? She is a big woman—there is a "presence" about her. She is not good-looking, but there is a lovely calmness about her face. You see, Adelina, she has suffered a very great deal.'

Then she told me a little of the love story of Clara and Robert Schumann, and of her terrible struggle against poverty after Robert had become insane.

'Since his death she has devoted her life to making his works better known. When she first came to England as long ago as 1856 the critics were very cruel and had not a good word to say for his music.'

'Oh, poor Clara Schumann!'

The story had caught my childish imagination and—who knows?—may have led me years later to try to continue Clara Schumann's task.

'I think you will grow to love her, too. She has children of her own!'

'Then I suppose she understands us,' I remarked with the wisdom of youth.

'Yes, of course. You must not be frightened of her. If you are

Finale

good enough she will take you, and if she does, you will be one of the most fortunate girls in the world!

‘Fortunate!’

Somehow, after that conversation, all dread left me. I wove around the figure of Clara Schumann the romanticism of a child of fourteen. My excitement mounted as an announcement appeared in the papers that she would be playing at the Saturday and Monday “Pops” in the St James’ Hall, and also in the Philharmonic Concerts. She was to be the guest of Mr Behrens, who lived near Hyde Park. Later announcements of her arrival in England appeared in the papers, and I knew that soon now she would hear me play.

I practised with a fever of anxiety I had never felt before. Now it was so near, I knew that more than anything in the world I wanted to become her pupil. Only just before the audition did Fanny Davies tell me of it. She knew the nervous state into which I was working myself. Speechless with strain, I drove by her side to the house near Hyde Park. She was wise not to talk to me; I could not have heard her! My hands were clammy and I just could not think. I felt I could not remember a note of what I had to play!

Yet, as I came into the presence of Clara Schumann, all my fears left me. I saw her, a queenly figure, dressed in black, with black lace draped over her silvery hair. Her eyes were large, dreamy and sad, but they were motherly eyes, perhaps because of my smallness. Then she smiled at me, a smile I have never forgotten. With her hand on my shoulder she spoke in German to Fanny Davies. Then, turning to me, she told me to play, and this time it was with a smile of encouragement.

My first effort was a piece by Bach, my second was a *Gigue in D Minor* by Haesler. Never have I been listened to with such utter stillness; it calmed any nerves I still might have, and it gave me a confidence I had never felt before.

When I had finished I too sat quiet. Even now I can remember the stillness of the room. Nobody spoke. Then, looking up, I saw Clara Schumann was smiling at me again, and suddenly I felt terribly happy!

After a moment she rose, patted my shoulder and became deep in conversation with Fanny Davies. How I wished I had learnt more German! I was dying to know what was being said, but it was not until we were once more in the carriage that I knew.

'So, Adelina—you are to become a professional pianist!' There was no mistaking the satisfaction of my teacher.

'You mean—?' but I could not put it into words.

'Madame Schumann will take you as her pupil!'

Poor Fanny Davies! I think I promptly burst into tears of relief, but the next moment I was laughing and hugging her. We were both so happy by the time we got home, that we shouted the good news the moment we got inside my aunt's house. How pleased they all were!

As soon as Lady Thompson and my friends in Birmingham were told the good news, they began to make plans and it was finally arranged that Pen and I should go to Frankfurt in the following September, 1886, for a year, later extended to five years.

I could not believe it to be true. I worked for a little longer with Fanny Davies, and how sad I was when my last lesson came. But I could not be sad for long, for I was to have the first carefree holiday in my life. The Priestleys had invited us to stay with them and we were whisked off to North Wales, together with the Johnstones, who became the chief subscribers to my German education.

For the first time I had leisure to bathe in the sea and to learn to play tennis. I cannot think how the girls played as they did in stiff shirt blouses, long full skirts and bustles. It must have been difficult to run with one's waist pulled into a tiny belt and a little

Finale

stiff straw hat perched on one's head! But players like Lottie Dodd played hard games. Fortunately I was still at the age of short dresses and no hat-pins.

We had wonderful musical evenings. The Priestleys' sons, Will and Bert, made up our party. Bert was eighteen, fair and very good-looking. We used to play many 'cello and piano sonatas together, particularly the Rubinstein *D Major*.

I was very spoilt. There were so many things I had never done in my life because I had never had time to play anything but the piano. My new-found friends delighted in introducing me to everything. For the first time I had recreation, exercise, fresh air, rest, dancing, and I lost the half-strained, lanky, white-faced look which up to then had been mine. They even introduced me to cold baths, which I simply loved and kept up until 1945! In the afternoons they made me have a rest, a luxury I had never known before. How grateful I was—and have been, all my life, to those wonderful friends.

After Wales we all returned to the Johnstones' house outside Birmingham, where I learnt to row and to play billiards. They had just had a new music-room built with walls and ceiling of oak, and a Steinway concert grand was installed. Of course there was to be a grand "opening" party just before I left for Germany, and to complete my happiness Fanny Davies was coming down to play.

What with preparations for the party and our departure for Germany the next day, my head was in a whirl. The Priestleys had seen to my wardrobe and I was excited by all the lovely clothes and the music I was to take. We were to live at a pension in Frankfurt, at 39 Ullmenstrasse, kept by some maiden ladies called Köhnlein. The street was close to the house of the Schumanns in the Myliustrasse.

My boxes stood packed. Then began one of the most wonderful

evenings of my childhood. Dancing and music, and all those I loved—everyone was happy for me, and wishing' me well. When at last I was sent off to bed I was too tired and happy to do anything but sleep. When the good-byes had to be said there were promises of more parties and more holidays and I felt that soon I would be back, and anyway Pen was with me, and we were about to cross the Channel for the first time. I was excited and exhilarated. The great adventure had begun!



Frankfurt-on-Main and Serious Study

ALTHOUGH I was used to travel in England, I had never crossed the Channel before. I adored the sea with a fierce passion, and could not drag myself away from the ship's side. In vain Pen tried to make me go below to the cabin—I was not going to miss a moment of the voyage. The train journey was different, and we felt a little strange as the carriages and station officials all looked so unlike those in England. It was a little frightening not to be able to understand anyone. Pen had brought masses of food packed in a large holdall, for there were no restaurant cars and we had to provide for ourselves. Some people had methyated spirit stoves and made themselves tea in the carriages. We had not thought of that.

Our arrival is very hazy to me; we were met, of course, and I remember being driven in darkness to a strange house, but except for the novel experience of reaching our bed-sitting-room by an outside staircase, I was too tired to notice much else. It was only the next morning that we realized how lucky we were. The room was on the third floor. It contained two small beds, a lovely Steinway grand piano, a big white stove, a square wooden table, a washstand and four chairs. I was delighted with everything, exploring everywhere while Pen

unpacked, trying to arrange things for our future life together.

'Look, Pen!' I cried, having ventured out on to the staircase. 'Grapes, lots and lots of grapes!'

Somehow it was so exciting to see them, green and purple, hanging in great clusters round the windows of the house. I was yet to experience the bitter cold winters, when we broke the ice in our wash-basin jugs and carried hot baked potatoes in our muffs, for there were no hot-water bottles then!

I remember that I was hoping to see Clara Schumann and to have a lesson almost at once, but three or four days elapsed, during which we were expected to settle down. We were not allowed to speak a word of English from the day of our arrival and were taught simple German words at once, *danke* and *bitte* being the first two, and the German for bread-and-butter the next. At least we did not have to starve in silence!

After a few days I was told to go to the house of Clara Schumann in the Myliustrasse.

'What shall I do, what shall I say?' I was in a perfect fever of anticipation as Pen helped me to dress.

'Behave quite normally—knock at the door, and you will soon be told,' Pen wisely advised, in an effort to calm me. But I was far from calm when I hesitated before the great front door. Timidly I knocked, then more boldly as nothing happened. When it did I was promptly told to go round to the back entrance. Feeling a little sick, I blindly sought the way, saw some open French windows, hesitated, then slipped in. It seemed to be a kind of morning-room, and a girl was sitting there. She stared at me and made no sign. Nervously I looked away and sat carefully on the edge of one of the many chairs. Suddenly a wave of depression came over me. I longed desperately to be home, to be in the familiar music-room of Fanny Davies, to be with someone who spoke my language.

Finale

'Have you come for lessons?' Perhaps Ilona Eibenschütz, destined to become one of the greatest Hungarian pianists of the nineties, saw my sudden dejection. As I looked at her, she was smiling and I saw she was beautiful: slight, with lovely Eastern eyes and long thick lashes. She was older than I, and although she spoke little English, we managed to understand each other. She asked my age and what musical training I had had. As she talked to me my feeling of loneliness left me and I became immensely impressed by her, she was so intelligent, so vivacious. I was just plucking up my courage to ask her all about herself, when someone who reminded me a little of Clara Schumann entered the room.

Ilona rose and so did I. I soon learnt that this was the Schumanns' eldest daughter, Fräulein Marie. After making herself known to me and asking a few questions she made me sit at an upright piano, and I saw Ilona slip away. I was told to play slow technique (technical exercises at slow speed), and later a small prelude of Bach.

When the lesson was ended Fräulein Marie told me to go into the drawing-room to listen to Frau Schumann's pupils.

I remember I crept in at the door she indicated and slipped into the first empty chair, terrified of drawing attention to myself. The room was really two rooms divided by large folding doors. The beginners sat in the back room, which faced the tail-end of the grand piano and, of course, by the keyboard sat Clara Schumann.

Ilona Eibenschütz was playing the first movement of Mendelssohn's *G Minor Concerto*. I gazed enraptured at pupil and teacher. I was really here in the room with Clara Schumann! Near the piano were two small chairs. They were occupied by two lads, Leonard Borwick and Oberstadt. I listened to all three having their lessons and went home filled with every kind of emotion: admiration, envy, despair, hope and happiness. I dared not hope

that soon I would be sitting at that keyboard, but after a few weeks' hard study with Fräulein Marie, to my great joy I was allowed to have my first lesson with Frau Doktor, as she was called. I never went back to her daughters, although some pupils remained a year with them. After my first lesson I worked always with Clara Schumann herself and thus started one of the finest and most inspiring trainings any musical student could possibly have. By now my German was sufficiently good for me to follow her, and, speaking no English at all except to Pen, I soon became fluent enough to understand everything that Clara Schumann said to me.

Clara Schumann gave me an hour's lesson twice a week. We began with Bach or Scarlatti, or some such contemporary composer. Then came something longer, either a concerto or a sonata or a major work by Schumann or Brahms, and she finished with lighter pieces by Chopin, Mendelssohn and Liszt. I soon got to understand Clara Schumann's way of teaching. She never lost her temper, or raged at any of us. When pleased, she remained perfectly still while we played, but if not pleased, she fidgeted, which was most trying! She marked our music very little and would always apologise when doing so.

'You can always rub it out afterwards,' she remarked.

She taught us mostly by playing herself. Immediately a phrase or perhaps two bars displeased her, she motioned her pupil to rise, then sat down and showed how it should be played, and that was quite enough.

Clara Schumann would not tolerate affectation or any mannerism. She would have no false sentiment, only real expression, the genuine feeling which comes from the heart.

'Have you left your heart in England?' she once asked Borwick.

'You will never make an artist until you have loved and suffered,' she remarked to me. Perhaps that is why now, at the end

Finale

of my life, I know I am playing better than I ever did before.

At all times Clara Schumann insisted on depth of tone, correct and perfect phrasing and rhythm, which I call orchestral, for real strict rhythm is only achieved by an orchestra directed by a great conductor, and by these standards Clara Schumann's rhythm was orchestral. Only one other person I know had the rhythm I mean, and that was Sir Landon Ronald, himself a great pianist. If he had not made his name by conducting, he would have done so by his playing.

Clara Schumann played with the greatest expression, "felt" every note and expressed the composer's meaning. She had played duets with Chopin and Mendelssohn and other great composers of her generation and when she taught us how to play their works she had tradition at her fingers' ends. In these days music is edited by contemporary musicians, who do it quite well, of course, but my teacher had her knowledge handed down direct from Beethoven and Bach, and from the great composers she herself had known and at whose side she had sat while they played their own compositions.

Things did not always go well at my lessons and my progress was not without a number of setbacks. I attended the Konservatorium for harmony and, later on, fugue and counterpoint lessons. My master was a Russian, Ivan Knorr, a very eminent teacher who became Director of the Hoch Konservatorium at Frankfurt, but of whom I was terrified. Every fortnight there were small students' concerts called *Ubungsabende*, and each term ended with public orchestral concerts conducted by Scholtz, called *Prüfungen*. I was soon playing frequently at the *Ubungsabende*, at first just simple Bach or such pieces. I used to be very nervous. The professors sat in the front rows. Madame Schumann never came, but her daughters attended, and she herself would come to the *Prüfung* when any of her pupils played.

We favoured Schumann pupils know how such works as Schumann's *Andante* and *Variations*, first performed by Mendelssohn and the composer himself, *should* be played. I acquired my knowledge first-hand and have treasured it all my life.

After my first term I was told I could appear at the students' public concert and I chose Mendelssohn's *Rondo Capriccioso*. Ilona Eibenschütz, much to my envy, was to play Chopin's *B Flat Minor Scherzo*. The day came for me to play the *Rondo* in class to Madame Schumann in preparation for the concert. I had worked very hard. Her daughters' pupils were all seated in the back room, my fellow students sat in ours.

I played from memory right through without stopping once, but I noticed that Madame Schumann was fidgeting and shuffling her feet! I was not happy while playing. My interpretation seemed cold and pointless. I finished—there was dead silence! Then Frau Doktor began to talk quite quietly—she talked and talked, while the tears poured down my cheeks for the very first time during a lesson with her. There was “no expression”, “no power”, “no technique”, “no rhythm”. So it went on—no anything, in fact. Then came the dreaded words:

‘I could not think of allowing you to play this piece at the concert.’

With those words burning into my ears I heard her dismiss me and I somehow found my way out of the room, aware that all the students watched me go. Back in the pension I cried and cried and all Pen's efforts to comfort me failed.

In the morning Fräulein Marie sent for me; for a moment worse fears assailed me. Was I to be degraded and sent back to her? But she proved a friend indeed. Sorry for me, she had pleaded with her mother on my behalf. The news she had for me was that I was to play the first movement of Haydn's *Concerto in D* with the orchestra, instead of the *Rondo*. I could hardly believe my

Finale

ears! Life was glorious once again, happiness flooded back to me; perhaps it showed in my playing, for when the moment came I achieved a great success.

Apart from my music lessons life was very full, happily full. There were no more money troubles; we never talked of fame, but worked and studied for the sheer love of it. Music, reading, seeing and hearing lovely things left no room for the sordid or commonplace. I practised three hours a day—no more, no less—for my two lessons a week. In between there were German lessons from a German grammar book—I never saw an English or French one—also Latin, which was needed for counterpoint. These lessons were given by a Heidelberg student. Deportment and dancing were taught by a *prima ballerina* of the Opera House. These were to prepare me for going on and off the platform gracefully. There were also literature lessons in German from a Doktor Veith, a Professor of the University of Heidelberg. In the afternoons at three o'clock, with Fräulein Köhnlein and the girls of my pension, we went for a walk, coming back to coffee and rolls at four o'clock. In the evening we had either to read aloud in French or German, embroider or sing. Never were we allowed to do our own speciality. For example, I would sing, not play, and a singing student would play some instrument, however badly. I rather fancied myself as a singer and went in for Schumann and Schubert *Lieder* in a very high soprano voice!

Three times a week, some of us had to attend opera performances. In Frankfurt there was a magnificent opera house and many of the great artists sang there. Clara Schumann made us become familiar with all the operas. Students paid one mark for a seat in a box but sometimes the Schumanns sent me special tickets. Then there were the orchestral symphony concerts. In the concert hall were two galleries, and at rehearsals one gallery would be occupied by students from the Hoch Konservatorium at which

Madame Schumann was chief Professor. In the other gallery were the students of the rival school, the Raff Konservatorium down by the river, and I think there was a smaller school which occupied the gallery facing the platform.

There were days when Fräulein Köhnlein would take us for an outing, either somewhere on the Rhine or into the Taunus Mountains, just between Frankfurt and Homburg. We would walk through fields of narcissi. I loved them and have never forgotten their perfume.

As time went on and I got older, I was allowed to go to the English dances, and also to some grand ones given by the Germans. I did not like the latter at all. A stiff German officer would present himself, give a low bow, click his heels together and take me round the room in the quickest waltz imaginable. No word was exchanged, then I was waltzed back to my chaperone with more bows and clicking of heels. This went on all the evening.

The English colony dances were more fun, for Leonard Borwick and Kennerley Rumford, who later married Clara Butt, used to dance with us. All the girls were in love with Kennerley, except myself. He was very handsome and sang beautifully and I often accompanied him. We would meet on Sunday mornings at the little English church, where it was lovely to speak English again.

We had wonderful Christmas parties, at Madame Schumann's and other German houses. There were Christmas trees and tables loaded with presents, and the three Fräuleins Köhnlein, and the girls and I, would carry small trees and gifts of clothes to the poor people of the town. We made a regular procession, and took sweets and fruit. I used to get plum puddings from Birmingham which I kept in a hat-box under my bed, and the girls would sneak into my room and have a slice. Life was indeed very full and very happy and the longer I stayed the happier I became in my work.



Brahms and the Teaching of Clara Schumann

GREAT musicians came to Frankfurt to perform at the symphony concerts—composers, conductors, soloists and singers—and most of them visited the Schumanns' house. Although at the time I was filled with excitement by coming into contact with such great masters, I doubt, on looking back, if I realized to the full how, later, I would value and benefit by that personal contact. And of course I never dreamed that one day I would be the last playing musician who had actually studied their works with them. I had not been a student very long before I met Joachim and Brahms—Brahms, whose compositions I was already learning to love. They were the most frequent of all the visitors and I soon learnt that the coming of Brahms made a difference in the home of the Schumanns.

Life became gayer, less formal, and it was impossible to keep to strict discipline once he was in the house. I remember the first time I saw him, although for a moment I did not realize who he was. It was at one of my lessons with Clara Schumann. I had just finished playing part of Brahms' *Scherzo in E Flat Minor, Op. 4*, when the door opened and in walked a short stout man. He wore a beard and his hair was long, swept back from a magnificent brow. His dress had a certain carelessness about it, which failed



To Clara Schumann (*right*) I owed the most inspiring musical training that any pupil can have had, and from her I learnt the true tradition of playing the piano works of her husband, Robert Schumann (*left*).

I met Antonin Dvorak
when he was staying with
the Johnstones for the Bir-
mingham Musical Festival
in 1891.



Johannes Brahms was a
frequent visitor to Clara
Schumann's house while
I was studying with her.

to hide a look of distinction. Of all people I have ever met, Ching, the present-day teacher, reminds me of him most. The unusual intrusion into one of my teacher's lessons caused me to glance at her. Would she be annoyed? But to my surprise she was smiling at the intruder, a smile I had rarely seen before. Without greeting him she told me to repeat what I had already played. By then the visitor was standing behind me and I began to play.

Then, as I finished the opening phrase I heard his voice: 'No, no, it is too fast—you must draw it out more—slower, like this.' His hands were already on the keyboard, and Clara Schumann was saying, 'Let Dr Brahms show you, Adelina.'

Only then did I realize why she welcomed that intrusion. It was a thrilling moment for me, and as I listened I realised that here was a truly great musician whose hands, although seeming to rest quietly on the keyboard, brought out a depth and volume of tone, or the most heavenly delicate pianissimo. He played all the octaves in this particular work with a tremendous rhythm which burnt itself into my memory. Even when I got to know him better, it was always with a jolt that I heard him play. It was difficult to remember in everyday life from his very simplicity, his humour, and jokes, what a very great master he really was.

Brahms must have been about forty when I first saw him. It was through his great friend Joachim that he first met Robert Schumann, who later wrote of him in an article:

'... To me, who followed the progress of these chosen ones with the greatest sympathy, it seemed that in those circumstances there inevitably must appear a musician called to give expression to his times in ideal fashion; a musician who would reveal his mastery not in a gradual evolution, but like Athene would spring fully armed from Zeus's head. And such a one has appeared, a young man over whose cradle Graces and

Finale

Heroes have stood. His name is Johannes Brahms, and he comes from Hamburg, where he has been working in quiet obscurity, though instructed in the most difficult statutes of his art by an excellent and enthusiastically devoted teacher. A well-known and honoured master recently recommended him to me. Even outwardly he bore the marks proclaiming: "This is a chosen one." ¹

Joachim and Brahms met at a concert in Göttingen where Brahms, who was accompanist to the Hungarian violinist Remenyi, found the piano a semitone below the required pitch when he had to accompany the *Kreutzer Sonata* of Beethoven. He transposed it from A to B flat and played it by heart. Joachim knew what this required and afterwards introduced himself to Brahms, and so began a lifelong friendship. How close those two were, Brahms the composer and Joachim the great violinist! No wonder it was later written of him: 'He was gifted in interpreting the greatest music in absolute perfection.' Ever an unselfish musician, Joachim never tried to rival his friend.

Brahms, I soon discovered, took a real interest in Clara Schumann's pupils, and it was a habit of his to help some of us with his own compositions. After our first encounter he would stand behind me, his hand pressing on my shoulder, to slow or hasten some little phrase. I studied his concertos and most of his important compositions including the concerted works while I was in Frankfurt. He would often come in while I was practising and I remember that he was furious if one's bass was weak. His music had to be played with a full deep tone and this most decidedly in the left hand; he, like Madame Schumann, disliked sentimentality; we must be *geistig*, which I can only translate as "spiritual", but never *sentimentalisch*, which I personally call "sickly".

¹ Robert Schumann on Music and Musicians.

Brahms and the Teaching of Clara Schumann

The pure pianissimo tone must reach the last row in the highest gallery of the biggest concert hall. How often have I heard this said in the Clara Schumann music-room. Never have I forgotten it in all these years. Certainly the soft tones of both Brahms and Clara Schumann were memorable—something to strive after. An example of what I mean is one of Brahms' most popular pieces, the wonderful *G Minor Rhapsody*. The first subject with its bold, deep entrance and its full deep octaves in the left hand holds its listeners immediately, and the contrast of the third subject, which entranced Brahms' listeners when he played it, is full of pathos and mysticism. Memories crowd back as I think of all he said and taught—yet, too, there was his lighter, puckish side which sometimes called down Clara Schumann's disapproval. One morning I was waiting patiently with Leonard Borwick and Oberstadt for the regal entrance of Madame Schumann, when Brahms burst in beaming like a great, heavy schoolboy, holding a glass of some steaming hot beverage. It was a freezing morning and his welcome 'Drink this' needed no second bidding. I was the first victim and took a large gulp and my reaction made everybody laugh. I had never tasted hot grog or any form of alcohol before. My face was contorted and it was not surprising that Clara Schumann was full of disapproval when she came upon the scene.

'But Fräulein Marie made it for my cold—it will prevent them having colds!' he tried to put matters right. Dear Brahms! How kind he was and how we all adored him. His devotion to Clara Schumann was very touching even to us young students—that he loved her was obvious, or so we romantically thought. With a strange humility he always consulted her about his works, and as I look back I see he had an affection for her which was also homage. The world knows the great love story of Robert and Clara Schumann and the music born of it. For three years her father refused his consent, until finally in desperation they dispensed

Finale

with it and were married in 1839. The ultimate tragic climax—which prompted Brahms to write his *First Piano Concerto*—was Schumann's attempt to commit suicide in the Rhine. He had heard "sounding in his ears" before; now there were "voices", and at his own request he entered the private asylum where two years later he died.

All this Brahms had suffered with Clara Schumann. No wonder, therefore, that he never failed to express his loving and deep concern in her affairs. In July 1888, when she was going through a lean financial period, he begged her to accept a yearly sum of 10,000 marks towards the expenses of her great grandchildren. She was deeply moved, but refused the offer.

In the winter of 1896 Joachim, fresh from the impression of his last visit to Clara Schumann, had told Brahms that he feared she had not long to live. I give here the letter Brahms wrote to Joachim, as it shows so clearly the esteem and devotion he had for her:

'The thought of losing her can no longer frighten us. Not even me, the lonely one for whom all too little lives in this world. And when she has left us, will not our faces shine when we think of her—of that glorious woman whom we have been happy enough to know during the course of a long life, loving and admiring her ever more and more. Thus and thus only shall we mourn her.'

When Brahms stayed with the Schumanns he seemed to want to make them all as carefree as possible. Fräulein Marie enjoyed his visits although it made more work for her. She was a wonderful cook, and Brahms was a hearty eater and liked good wines, and he would always praise Fräulein Marie for her cooking. Then, of course, when Brahms was there, there were wonderful parties to which great artists were invited. Clara Schumann was a perfect hostess and she moved regally amongst her guests. Our

Brahms and the Teaching of Clara Schumann

eyes followed her and I was very proud to be there! She always wore black, with a lovely black lace mantilla over her silver hair, fastened with a harp of diamonds given her by the Princess of Wales. Piatti, the violinist, Davidoff, Hans Sitt, as well as Brahms and Joachim would perhaps be of the party. We would listen to their discussions, and hear them play or sing in these intimate surroundings.

Clara Schumann and Brahms would always play singly, then continue with duets. On one occasion I remember, they were playing the Hungarian Dances as a duet. Clara Schumann was looking extremely serious as she played, and Brahms, having looked at her repeatedly, suddenly called out, '*Warum bist du so ernsthaft, Clärchen?*' He was always full of fun and jokes.

Sometimes they would each play a violin sonata with Joachim, and Stockhausen and a great friend of Clara Schumann's, a Mrs Speyer, often sang Schumann's *Lieder*, accompanied by Clara Schumann. These parties were a feast of music. I was filled with a passionate longing to reach the perfection with which I was daily surrounded. No longer was I the child prodigy, content to smear over difficult passages, and as I relive Clara Schumann's own playing and her teaching, especially of her husband's works, these impressions are most vivid in my mind.

She taught us to play with truth, sincerity and love, to choose music we could love and reverence, not only music which merely displayed our technique in fast passages and allowed us to sentimentalize in slow ones. We were exhorted to be truthful to the composer's meaning, to emphasize every beauty in the composition and to see pictures as we played—'a real artist *must* have vision', Clara Schumann would say. If the music was to mean anything to our listeners, she told us, it must mean even more to us, the performers, and in giving pleasure to our hearers we had a great purpose to fulfil.

Finale

Apart from all this, her musical outlook was one of academic correctness. Her vigilance never relaxed in matters of tone-quality, rhythm and phrasing; in short, she treated the pianoforte as an orchestra and required her pupils to consider every phrase and to express it as though it were given to a separate instrument. The reason why Schumann's orchestration is rather poor is probably that the pianoforte was his orchestra. His keyboard music is extremely orchestral, and it is the player who concentrates on this aspect of it who will most successfully achieve fullness and depth of tone.

Clara Schumann's love and devotion to Robert never let her admit any weakness in his work. Yet as she played his music, some sudden weak phrases must have reminded her vividly of his ever increasing illness. His earlier and late works do not vary in characteristics, but one often comes across a phrase which makes one marvel that so great a composer could allow it to remain. I have often altered or corrected a certain chord, because it would be quite wrong "in harmony". I do not mean modern discords in which there is a certain point or reason, but the Schumann "harmonies" should at times have been corrected. There is a certain chord at the end of *Träumerei* that I have never played as he wrote it, for it is ugly and quite wrong. I feel sure that these discrepancies must have been the result of his mental lapses, and many critics maintain that his creative work became progressively less convincing.

In the familiar *Études Symphoniques* Clara Schumann was not prepared to sacrifice richness of tone to mere clarity. The theme is sometimes played with undue stress upon the melody, but she gave it a full range of colour throughout the harmony by pressing all the keys deeply. The sixth variation is often magnificently played nowadays, but the phrasing of the dual rhythm is neglected for the sake of speed and brilliant technique.

Her phrasing was so perfect that the cross-rhythm could be heard quite distinctly and it seemed as though each hand belonged to an independent player. The same is true of the eleventh variation, which gave wonderful scope to her exquisite art of part-playing.

As for speed in music, it is a terrifying thing, a menace, and much true musical value has been lost for its sake. Clara Schumann insisted over and over again that her husband's work contained no "passage work", whatever. By "passage work", of course, she meant interpolations written merely for the display of the brilliant performer, having no intrinsic musical values relating to the work as a whole. '*Keine Passagen*,' she would cry in despair if one tried to rattle through any rapid figuration with mere empty virtuosity. To her there was meaning in every note he wrote, and in the Piano Concerto, the Piano Quartet and the Piano Quintet, in particular, she would tolerate nothing that was done for mere brilliance and pace.

'Why hurry over beautiful things?' she would say. 'Why not linger and enjoy them?'

The first number of *Kreisleriana* is a case in point. Its lovely phrases go for nothing if played too quickly, and here Clara Schumann, again referring to the orchestral quality of the music, told us to listen to the violas and cellos in the second subject, to dream over it and remain very calm while bringing out all the notes fully in each hand.

At the same time there are things in Schumann which are played too slowly, for example *Pierrot* in *Carnaval*. It is marked *moderato* to prevent performers from playing it too quickly, but it should sound bright and mischievous, as Clara Schumann pointed out. She would give me playful little digs at each recurrence of the quaver figure. She was very particular over these portrait studies which had so much meaning for her. The impetuous *Chiarina*, No. 11, is of course a picture of herself as a young

Finale

girl. I remember her stopping me at one lesson, when I was playing another of the numbers.

'Mind his boots,' she said. 'You see, he had a very heavy tread, like a ploughman; you must do it like this.'

Then she played it herself, incomparably but, I hope, not quite inimitably. Of the *Paganini* intermezzo, she told me she had actually heard Paganini play it, and that it must be made to sound as though the player were tackling the special difficulties of a violin. Strict attention must be given to the phrasing; it should not be played too quickly, but should be speeded up here and there to avoid its sounding like a technical exhibition. After *Promenade*, that slow and gracious waltz preceded by a little stroll and conversation, comes the real *Carnaval*.

'Here,' Clara Schumann told me, 'you may go mad; you see people jostling one another, getting more and more excited; you may speed up and rush on to a grand climax and finale. But even so, never forget all the wonderful phrasing and give way now and again to convey Schumann's full meaning.'

When teaching the Concerto, Clara Schumann was rigorously exacting. She insisted that in the opening theme each finger of both hands should produce tone of absolutely equal value and that the liquid second subject should never be hurried, but played strictly in time with careful attention to the *diminuendo* in the left hand. The cadenza is too often misunderstood. Thought, not technique, must be the basis of its interpretation, according to the true Schumann tradition; it should be played very calmly, pensively and peacefully, with humility and love helping in a task that is far from easy, for to express beauty through simplicity is harder than any conceivable technical problem.

In the second movement, Frau Doktor would have none of it if we tried to be at all sentimental. She said it was an impassioned conversation between the orchestra and the

Brahms and the Teaching of Clara Schumann

soloist, though at times the "talk" was very gentle and kindly.

In the Piano Quintet she disliked it if we rushed any of the percussion and staccato passages, especially in the third movement which loses all its poetry if unduly hurried; and she was anxious that the polka suggestion in the left hand should be clearly emphasized all through the second subject. In the slow movement the phrases must "breathe deeply"—I cannot express her meaning more clearly than that. The direction *con anima* in the finale she wished to be understood as suggesting liveliness of expression rather than pace, and she said that where three similar phrases followed each other they must all be played with a slight difference—a point which no true artist will fail to understand. •

Thus we learnt the correct interpretation of all Schumann's pianoforte works and of his songs and all his compositions containing keyboard parts. The songs are particularly relevant to her teaching, since a singing tone and delivery of phrase is all-important. It was this above all that Clara Schumann asked of performers of her husband's work, and among the means of attaining it was close attention to quality of tone in both hands and in all the notes of the chords, which must be pressed deeply and heard distinctly, while no passage of any kind should ever be hurried. It was by following these precepts of a great artist and a great teacher that we learnt, and others may still learn, to play not only Schumann's music, but the music of other masters too, with truth and sincerity.

Every spring while I was in Frankfurt, Clara Schumann used to visit London to play at the "Pops" and the Philharmonic, and of course she played at the Frankfurt Symphony Concerts. On these occasions while she was at rehearsal, her pupils placed flowers on her staircase to greet her when she came home. Most of us kissed her hand after our lessons.

Finale

Often we used to make her little gifts, and although her life was invariably full, busy and exacting she always found time to acknowledge them. Among my most treasured letters are a number from Clara Schumann. This one is typical of her punctiliousness:

Frankfurt

Dear Adeline,

Thank you for your good wishes and the present accompanying them. Marie also thanks you for hers.

Your wishes are reciprocated from my heart.

Your Clara Schumann

Eugenie returns tomorrow from London.

There was so much to do, so much to learn, that somehow time passed without my realizing that months were slipping into years. I went backward and forward for holidays in England, and from being a gawky child I realized that I had become a young woman, not unaware of the opposite sex! I was small and my lessons with the *prima ballerina* had given me grace. As I gained mastery of the piano, so I acquired confidence in myself. No doubt I was a little conceited, for I was made much of by everyone and I was still very young.

Frankfurt in the year 1888 was very beautiful and peaceful, with its lovely river, the Palmengarten and the Opera House. It held everything in life that I wanted for the moment. Then from England came Bert Priestley, ostensibly to study the 'cello with Cossman. We had met during my holidays and for a long time he had wanted to marry me, and his parents were in favour of the match. I confess that I was not particularly in love with him, but of course I was flattered! After a little while I gave in and at my age it seemed very thrilling to be engaged.

Of course Clara Schumann took a kindly interest in my

first romance. It was characteristic of her to keep in touch with all that affected our lives, and she made a point of meeting Bert as soon as she could. I have kept the letter which she wrote to me at the time:

Feb. 19th.

Dear Adeline,

Can you come tomorrow or the day after tomorrow to see me? You will find me at home tomorrow at 10.30 or on Sunday at 11 o'clock. Will you give the enclosed to your fiancé, please, as I do not know his address.

Yours lovingly,

Clara Schumann

I had hoped to see you and Mr Priestley on the evening of the 16th.

Just before I became engaged, the Emperor Frederick III had died, only forty-nine days after his succession. He had been suffering from serious throat trouble, and his wife, who, as everyone knows, was our Princess Royal, daughter of Queen Victoria, insisted that Sir Morell Mackenzie, the famous laryngologist, should be sent for from England. This caused a quarrel between him and the eminent German doctors, for Sir Morell did not agree that the malady was cancer. He made, unfortunately, a tragic error, and Bismarck and the German doctors knew it. At his death German antagonism and jealousy of England and the English became very apparent, even to me. It did not prevent Bert and me, however, from taking part in the coronation of Kaiser William. Bert climbed a lamp-post and shouted, 'God bless the Kaiser,' at the top of his voice, which I echoed meekly from the pavement. The Kaiser certainly looked handsome, all medals and moustache, and he gave the lamp-post, or rather us, a special salute as he drove past. How we would come to "bless" him neither

Finale

of us then realized! I suppose I took a personal interest in the Kaiser because one of his aunts—the Landgravine of Hesse—used to visit the Schumanns. She was very musical, and we used to play to the Landgrave, who was blind. Their son, who also was blind, was a gifted composer who died not many years ago. Perhaps watching him listening to Clara Schumann gave me the first inkling of what music could mean to the sick and those less fortunate than ourselves.



Travels and More Famous Musicians

ONE SUMMER Clara Schumann packed us off for two glorious months. I often think how relieved she must have been to see us go, to have her home to herself and her family, and to be not always under the eyes of students!

For myself, I was in love with love, if not with Bert Priestley, and felt quite important to return at the age of sixteen to my English friends with an engagement ring and with Bert as my constant attendant. If at times I found it irksome I was not at the moment prepared to admit it, and I think Bert took our engagement very seriously.

I stayed with the Johnstones for the first part of the time at a house they had taken at Loch Long. I had played in Edinburgh, Glasgow and Dundee as a child, but had never been to the Highlands. Mentioning Dundee reminds me of the terrible disaster of the Tay Bridge in 1879 when a train fell through into the river. By some miracle Sir Charles Hallé, Wilhelmina Norman, Neruda and members of the orchestra had missed that particular train. When Pen and I had visited Dundee our lodgings were almost opposite the tremendous gap, and I have never liked crossing the bridge on stormy nights since!

For the last part of the holidays we returned to Birmingham

Finale

and stayed at Headingly for the Musical Festival. My two chief patrons, George Johnstone and Mr Phipson Beale of Edgbaston, were directors. Incidentally, after my last broadcast I received a charming letter from a member of the Beale family who was obviously unaware that a relation of his had been one of my patrons! When I was young, music was a far more social and personal affair than it is today, and it was very usual for eminent families to give their patronage to musicians of promise, to help and encourage, support them financially and give social functions at which an artist was introduced to their circle and played in the intimate surroundings of their homes.

It was when I stayed at Headingly that I met and played with many great musicians who came as guests. Grieg, Dvorak, Arthur Sullivan, Villiers Stanford and Hubert Parry were some of them. Grieg and Sullivan had been fellow students at Leipzig and Stanford and Parry both became Professors at the Royal College of Music. Grieg had played his Pianoforte Concerto for the first time in London at a Philharmonic Concert. He stayed at Headingly a week with his sweet little wife. I can see him now as he sat at the piano in a worn brown velvet coat which he loved. He had dreamy grey eyes and his manner was gentle and very quiet. He was a most beautiful pianist. In a way we had something in common, for his mother, who was of Norwegian peasantry, had taught him to play the piano at a very early age, as my father had taught me. His parents had met and married when his father was English consul in Bergen. His mother was a pianist and there is no doubt that it was from her he inherited his great talent. At nine years old he had completed his first composition. Later, like Eileen Joyce, he was sent to Leipzig to study, where overwork perhaps partly accounted for his subsequent illness and for the look of frailty which he had.

Every morning Grieg would come into the music-room, and

if I were there, he would make me play with him. He could never leave the piano for long, but would sit for hours, extemporizing or playing through a song or some other work of his own. He would make me play after him, or if it were the Concerto we would take it in turns to play a movement. Grieg did not like the last movement of his Concerto played too fast; it had to be super-rhythmical, particularly in the left hand. I do not think he dreamed how often it would come to be played, and how this would have pleased him, for he loved his own music quite openly. Even I had heard the story of how sometimes, when conducting *Peer Gynt*, he would put down his baton and listen in rapture to the orchestra while they played on without him!

He had just finished the Holberg Suite for orchestra, and honoured me by saying he would arrange it for the piano just for me. He played it to me many times and then made me play it to him. Sometimes his wife would join us and I sat enchanted as she sang to his accompaniment. Their devotion to each other and common passion for music was more than touching.

Dvorak, on the other hand, was very different from any musician I had ever met. My first impression was that he was "a jolly good fellow" and at the same time rather quaint. His face was broad, his eyes very bright above a squat nose and a beard which he wore trimmed very close. With his dark velvet coat he wore a huge silk bow, which seemed out of keeping with the rest of his appearance. He would stroll about with his hands in his pockets, and you could always tell where he was, for he would whistle or hum as he walked. The son of a butcher who lived near Prague, he would make a point of driving in the carriage and pair with my friend, our host's daughter, to buy good sharp knives in Birmingham for his father. Butchering and music did not seem to go together, but he was a dutiful son and took obvious pride in his father's work.

Finale

We never played together, but one morning when I was alone practising in the music-room, the door quietly opened and to my surprise he strolled in, thrusting his hands as usual deep in his pockets.

‘I give you a ha’penny if you play us our Ballade,’ by which he meant Chopin’s *A Flat Ballade*. It was one of my special pieces and a great favourite in those days. I was determined to have that halfpenny! Without more ado I started to play while he listened intently. When I had finished he took my hand, solemnly shook it, smiled his thanks and turned to go.

‘Herr Dvorak!’ I called, and as he turned I faltered—‘My halfpenny?’

‘Do you wish it, Fräulein Adclina?’

‘Oh, yes—I shall keep it all my life.’ But he turned again to the door, opened it, and I thought my halfpenny was lost for ever. Then with a sudden smile he said, ‘I come back with ha’penny,’ and was gone. I went on playing and after quite a long time he returned and held out my halfpenny.

‘See what I write for you,’ he said, and I felt his eyes on me as I eagerly studied his inscription. On one side of the coin he had scratched with a pin, nail, or perhaps one of the knives he had bought for his father, “Dvorak”; on the right-hand side of Britannia was written “Birmingham” and by the ship “October ’91”. On the other side across Queen Victoria’s chest was scrawled “Adelina” and in front of Her Majesty’s nose he wrote “Ballade”—as it was originally written.

I think I hugged him, I was so pleased. Later, I had it covered with a sovereign’s-worth of gold, but now as I look at it, I realise how many years have passed since he gave it to me; only with a magnifying glass can I read his writing but it still recaptures the joy of that moment.

The following story appears characteristic of him to those who

knew him—with all our admiration we often wondered if he were quite serious! The Birmingham Musical Festival asked him to write an oratorio. The Festival Committee's request was answered by this telegram from Prague: 'Please send stuff out of the Bible—Antonin Dvorak.' The result was the *Stabat Mater*, first performed in Birmingham.

I never met Gounod, who died in 1893 at the age of seventy-five, although he used to visit the Johnstones. The tenor Joseph Maas and his wife were also great friends of theirs, and often came for a visit. One summer while on the lake he caught a severe chill which developed into pneumonia, and he died in a few days. I was there at the time and was impressed by the fact that a week before a dinner party had been given for him and we had sat down thirteen. He was the first to leave the table. The others objected, but Maas only laughed. Ever since I have refused to dine as one of thirteen at table.

Of my host Mr Johnstone I cannot speak too highly. He was a great man and a good man. I was only one of the many he helped, another being Elgar. He taught me about Swedenborg and we used to attend the New Church. I became intensely interested, for it was the first time I had heard of those who had passed over being near. He once told me that the greatest of sins was ingratitude. 'Remember that all your life, Adelina!'—and indeed I have done so. One holiday they took me to Baden-Baden where there was a piano in the hotel. Of course, I sat down and played. It was a terrible affair and in bad condition, and I complained very loudly and with much annoyance, but I got no sympathy from Mr Johnstone.

'Never let me hear you complain that a piano is bad; a real artist can make any piano speak, and the most beautiful piano in the world, if played by a bad performer, will sound dreadful.'

With what wisdom he spoke, and how he put me to shame.

Finale

I have often had reason to recall his words during distant tours. Time and time again I have encountered bad pianos but I have always found they could be "nursed" and so give pleasure to the listener. Of course, it gives far more trouble to the player, who can just play, dream and enjoy, when given a wonderful Steinway or Blüthner.

During the lovely holidays which followed we went to the Leeds Festival, and there I again met Sir Arthur Sullivan, who for many years had been their conductor. He, of course, enquired after Clara Schumann, for it was through Sir Arthur that Schumann's First Symphony was first heard at the Crystal Palace. London owed quite a debt to Sir Arthur, for besides his own work he did much to introduce music-lovers to the works of the great German masters. Quite unspoilt by adulation, he was really pleased when I congratulated him on the recent success of *The Gondoliers* and *The Yeomen of the Guard* which had been produced the previous year.

Another composer of whom I saw a great deal was Edward German, a fitting pupil of Sir Arthur's. I was in the front row of the stalls the night he conducted the first performance of his *Nell Gwyn* dances, which he had already played on the piano to me. He took the last quick dance at a tremendous and exciting pace. At the end he got a terrific ovation and I felt a thrill of pride when he smiled at me as he acknowledged the applause.

Part of my holidays I spent with Lady Thompson. It saddened me to find her almost paralysed with arthritis until finally she could do nothing for herself. She would drive for two hours in the park each day and sometimes liked me to drive with her. I found this very tiring, for she was a most brilliant woman, a linguist, a great musician, and most religious, and she talked quickly and incessantly, expecting me always to be ready with an intelligent answer. Lady Thompson and her son Herbert often

corrected my speech and my deportment. It was not to be wondered at that I found being with them a certain strain.

‘Adelina, do hold yourself up!’

‘Adelina, do not *frown* so—I like your smile.’

‘Do not say “awfully”; use the word “exceedingly”.’

I can hear Lady Thompson’s voice now as she corrected me. She would insist that I practised for hours at the piano while she listened to me from her room. Suddenly the door would open and the footman appear.

‘Please, miss—Her Ladyship says you took that last passage too fast on the first page of the second movement,’ or, ‘Her Ladyship would like the second subject brought out much more than you did just now, miss!’

I realize now how good it was for me, but at the time I rather resented it during the holidays, after working hard all the year.

Sir Henry had an observatory at their country house, “Hurst-side”, and his assistant sometimes let me look through the telescope at the moon and stars. Sir Henry himself would tell me all about them, and so stimulated a lifelong interest in astronomy, a subject which my father had forced me to learn something about when I was only a child. His other topic of conversation for my benefit was the dissection of rats which he practised when a medical student. How I squirmed! He hated music, and he and his wife agreed to differ over many subjects. Lady Thompson had hoped that I would marry their son, Herbert, and she was not pleased at all about my engagement to Bert Priestley. But Herbert had a beard and wore glasses, and I could not feel enthusiastic!

Lady Thompson entertained many famous people and I again met Joachim, Piatti, Mr and Mrs Henschel, and Alma Tadema, the painter, whose lovely house in St John’s Wood, with its amazing studio, was so much written about. It was like a Greek palace, with a gallery at one end, cunningly lighted to

Finale

give the impression of the setting sun. On the platform stood a Broadwood piano especially made for Sir Alma Tadema. It had an inlaid case; the black keys were of tortoiseshell and the white of mother-of-pearl. I hated its over-magnificence and artificiality, but once when Paderewski was there, I had to play to him on it. I chose Schumann's *Études Symphoniques*. The notes confused me so much that my memory almost failed me at the last moment. The lid was lined with a sheet of vellum and every artist who played on these occasions was asked to sign it. I noticed Clara Schumann's name.

Paderewski was sitting for his portrait to Sir Alma and Lady Tadema, and I remember that this young man of twenty-six, who had proved himself so great a pianist, enchanted me with his magnificent head of hair. He wore it very long, and it reminded me of spun silk. Later it was reported that his wife brushed and combed it, and that he was almost as temperamental over his hair as over his performances. He was a great artist, and liked to give his recitals in the dimmest of dim lighting.

Another guest was Princess Louise, Marchioness of Lorne, who was a good artist, and I used also to meet Sir Frederick Leighton (later Lord Leighton), whom I knew very well and often visited at his house near Holland Park, with its wonderful "Arab Room", where a small fountain played continuously.

Sir John Stainer, the composer of *The Crucifixion*, was a frequent visitor at the Johnstones' while I was there; he seemed to think well of me, and I was flattered.

I began to learn that humility and modesty were the chief characteristics of all these eminent people, and that it is left to the second-rate artists to express conceit and put on "airs and graces"! Over a long life I have seen how true this is.

The Thompsons took me along to the Henschels' to hear Paderewski give a recital. Sir George Henschel was the founder

and conductor of the London Symphony Concerts; he also composed and had a delightful baritone voice. I can vividly recall Paderewski seated at the piano, facing the western sun, and rays shining on his thick gold hair, creating an aureole around his head. Incidentally he broke three hammers that afternoon!

Holidays like this were packed with interest and I would return to Frankfurt full of energy and ambition. It was good to be back in Clara Schumann's house, with its charming furniture and beautiful etchings. To enter again her salon with its polished floors and lovely rugs, to approach the Steinweg Grand and, above all, to see my beloved teacher with her collie dog, always our most constant audience, lying close to her feet.

As the years went on, the work became harder and harder, for I had the big concertos and sonatas to study as well as the great works of Schumann and Brahms. I was an easy sight-reader and quick student, and the effort on the whole was small for me. One delightful pastime was going round to the house where Ilona Eibenschütz lived, and practising with her on two pianos. She had two beautiful Grands and it was my first experience of two-piano playing.

I used often to play with Eugenie Schumann, another of Clara's daughters. She accompanied me sometimes in my concertos, particularly the Schumann. Fräulein Eugenie was a fine pianist and a charming, attractive woman. Fräulein Marie was the domesticated member of the family, and was often to be seen in gloves, dusting and attending to the household in between her lessons; but she too was a very fine musician.

The Schumanns thought a great deal of a pupil called Alice Dessauer. She was a particular friend of Ilona's and I was rather envious, perhaps a little jealous and "out of it", for I was "only English". Alice played with enormous expression, and was particularly *geistig*, as the Schumanns called it. Unfortunately

Finale

she disappointed them, for in the end her nerves gave way. One summer holiday, I remember, Fanny Davies arranged for Alice to go to Birmingham with us. Alice and I were to play the Schumann *Andante* and *Variations* on two pianos at the Midland Institute. I was intensely excited and danced about all day. I remember Bert Priestley saying, 'She smells blood,' because I was longing to get into the real profession and this was a glimpse of what was to come. We got a great ovation from a large audience and I had to play some solos by Chopin as well. Concerts were few in those days and it was unusual for students to appear. However, I presume we were exceptional and played as finished artists, and after all we had been acclaimed already by Brahms and Clara Schumann!

All too soon came my last winter in Frankfurt, and a rather alarming adventure. Bert Priestley insisted upon taking me and two other girls on a picnic to the Feldberg mountains. Fräulein Köhnlein was very much against it, but nothing daunted, we sallied forth. We took a train, then began our walk up the mountain. All went well until the snow started, but we walked gaily on. It got thicker and thicker and turned into a blizzard. Then we realized that we had lost our way. Dusk descended—the wind became biting cold, the snow stung us. Our feet were aching and I was sobbing and bitterly cold. At last we saw the lights of a cottage and somehow Bert got us to it. The people were kindness itself. We were given hot coffee and food, and our feet were rubbed until the circulation started again. It was some hours before we were able to face the journey down to the station (Homburg, then on to Frankfurt), accompanied by men with lanterns, and the Fräuleins were nearly frantic with worry when we finally arrived home about one a.m. The result was a severe chill for two of us, but mine developed into pleurisy and I fretted at the setback. The time was so near for me to leave

Frankfurt and begin on my career, and I grudged every lost moment.

My one regret about my Frankfurt days is that, in spite of the persuasion of Direktor Scholtz and Herr Knorr, I spent no time on composition and scoring.

'I am going to be a solo pianist!' was my answer to them. I have so often regretted my refusal, for I have composed a number of things since those days, and have written several orchestral works.

Everyone from England came to Frankfurt. A few months before I left, Cyril Scott and Roger Quilter came into my class. Antony Bernard, Granville Bantock and Eric Coates were studying with Knorr. Cyril Scott reminded me some years later of a certain examination in a fugue which Knorr had left us to work out. I was the only girl in the class and was very proud of myself for gaining the highest marks.

As time drew near for my London début, I was working at top speed on a large repertoire, and at the last students' public concert to be held in January 1891 I was to play Rubinstein's *Concerto in D Minor*. Frau Doktor implored me to play it from music, but I insisted I must do it from memory. She said I was taking a great risk, and then asked me what I was going to wear. I told her I had planned to wear my cream cashmere dress trimmed with gold embroidery. It was a long simple frock, very plain, with short sleeves, and made in England. The day before the concert she presented me with a necklace of some lovely gold Venetian beads which she had brought from Italy. How pleased I was! The feel of it gave me confidence as I stepped on to the platform the following day.

The concert hall was packed. I was the only soloist and all the Professors were seated in the front rows. Madame Schumann was in the centre. Direktor Scholtz, who was conducting, led

Finale

me on when my turn came. My heart was very full, and I think I played as well as I had ever done in my lessons. I knew my teacher was pleased at the ovation I received and this made me very happy. I had wanted so much to do her credit. I give the translation of the following letter which I received from her soon after:

Feb. 1891

Dear Miss de Lara,

I have written to Mr Chappell at St James' Hall and suggested that he should engage you for the last of his "Pops" at the end of March. As you leave at the beginning of March, this gives plenty of time for you to play once for Mr Chappell. Trusting that my hopes will be fulfilled.

With best wishes,

Your loving

Clara Schumann

All too soon came my last lesson with her. It was the only time I ever had one quite alone. I played Beethoven's *Appassionata Sonata*, as I was to begin my forthcoming London recital with it. I played it shockingly that morning; my hands were frozen and I was utterly miserable. The thought that I was leaving Frankfurt and Clara Schumann was too much for me. Frau Doktor sat at my side, while I was going through this most distressing performance, but she never fidgeted, she was completely still, and I gulped every now and then—I finished and stood up and we both burst out crying. She put her arms round me and we sobbed and sobbed. Finally, I left her and sobbed all the way home. I never saw her again. . . .

The last night came at the Ulmenstrasse; a party was given and there were wonderful cakes, including my favourite marzipan. A little stage was erected and there were *tableaux vivants*. The last

one was the "Three Fates". There was an old woman spinning, a beautiful middle-aged woman, and a lovely young girl holding a laurel wreath. To my astonishment, the girl stepped down from the stage and placed the wreath on my head. The little audience, which included the girls from my *pension*, rose and cheered and cheered. Of course, I gulped again and again, and the tears poured down my cheeks. Thus did I leave Frankfurt-on-Main. Can one wonder that I look back on those years as the most wonderful and peaceful years of all my life?



I Begin my Career

IN the early spring of 1891 I arrived back in London. The thought of beginning to make contacts all over again filled me with the loneliness I had felt on my first arrival in Frankfurt. True, there was Bert, but already I was getting bored with him—and Birmingham, where all those I really loved were, was a long way away.

It had been arranged by Lady Thompson that I should go back direct to 35 Wimpole Street, their London home. If I were to get London engagements, I had better be on the spot.

I found the big, quiet house, with butler and footman treading softly on thick carpets, a complete change after the *pension*. I missed the clatter up and down wooden stairs, the laughter and chatter of fellow students, pianos always being played, work, noise and fun. For the first time I was getting an inkling of how lonely my profession could be. To make it worse, I was never sure if I were doing "the right thing", for the Thompsons' was a very formal home.

The first week I was there Sir Henry gave one of his celebrated "octaves", a dinner for eight men, with eight courses to promote "the feast of reason and flow of soul". I remember on that particular occasion the Prince of Wales came, and I watched his

arrival from the top of the spiral staircase! Later I sat with Lady Thompson in the drawing-room, hoping the men would join us, but they never appeared. However, I was soon to discover that Lady Thompson entertained on most evenings and that I had only changed one form of musical surroundings for another.

'Adelina, I expect you will be asked to play tonight,' Lady Thompson warned me one evening.

'I will do my best. Are many people coming?' I asked eagerly.

'Piatti, Joachim, William Shakespeare (the singer), and the Henschels—oh! and Ilona Eibenschütz, so you see you will have something to live up to.' She smiled.

I felt a little shaken. Rather a distinguished gathering to play to in cold blood! I hurried to my piano and spent the rest of the morning revising. I selected the Brahms *Rhapsody in F Sharp Minor*. I knew it would please Joachim if I played it as Brahms had shown me. As it was, I need have had no fears; it was a lovely evening. It was wonderful to see Ilona again, and to hear her play the Beethoven *Op. III Sonata*. William Shakespeare sang to us. He had the most glorious voice and was one of the most sought-after teachers of the day. The following week George du Maurier was one of the guests, and I was really excited when I was invited to his lovely house at Hampstead, where I saw some of his original cartoons which appeared in *Punch*.

It was not very long after I had been back in England that a letter arrived from Arthur Chappell. I remember it was by my plate at breakfast time. I opened it, trying not to be too hopeful. Would he grant me an audition or would it contain some vague promise? I knew that by now he would have had Clara Schumann's letter.

What it did contain caused me to give a squeal of joy. Sir Henry lowered his paper and looked over his glasses in displeasure. Lady Thompson raised her eyebrows. I had quite obviously

Finale

done "the wrong thing", with the servants present. In those days young ladies were expected to conceal their emotions.

'It's just—it's just——' for a second I was curbed, then I burst out triumphantly: 'Mr Chappell writes to engage me for the last concert of the season. March 21st!'

I looked at them both excitedly. I felt elated. I wanted to get up and dance round the table.

'My dear, that really is good news.'

I must say Lady Thompson did look pleased and Sir Henry congratulated me generously.

'Shows the faith he has in Madame Schumann!' he remarked.

'I shall buy you a dress for the occasion. We will choose the material tomorrow.'

'Oh, thank you, thank you——' Suddenly life was very exciting again.

True to her word, Lady Thompson took me to her dressmaker's the next day, and there was much choosing of material and colour. At last, we decided on a canary-coloured cashmere, to be lined with canary silk and bordered at the hem with brown plush. The collar and cuffs were to match. The thought of playing in cashmere makes me wonder, now, how I ever played in such hot dresses; for to play a concerto is quite as exacting as a hard game of tennis! So much material went into the dress. However, in those days we thought nothing of it, and the halls were not heated as they are now.

The problem of the dress for my *début* being settled, Lady Thompson then took it upon herself to drill me for the actual concert. The Saturday "Popular Concerts" or "Pops", as they were called, were held in St James' Hall during the afternoon, and the Monday "Pops" in the evening. I was to play at the former.

As I began to practise in the Thompsons' drawing-room, Lady Thompson gave me a handkerchief of beautiful Honiton lace.

Fashions have altered of late years, but when I "came out" pianists came on to the platform, bowed, sat at the piano, placed the handkerchief on the left (a habit I have noticed in Eileen Joyce), then played a 'long preliminary' extempore and modulated between different pieces. I used to find it a dreadful tax, especially before every lesson.

Very often as I worked away, the door would open and the butler would enter.

'Her ladyship send her compliments and feels that you took the passage a little too fast.'

So it went on until, almost in despair, I longed for a sound-proof room; but worse was to come. The night before the concert, with the arrival, after many fittings, of my dress, Lady Thompson announced I was to put it on and go through my whole programme for herself and Herbert. Strung up as I was, I felt in no mood for this ordeal!

The Broadwood Concert Grand, with its heavy brass fittings, stood in one of the drawing-rooms which had great double doors. It was full of priceless china and wonderful *objets d'art*, for Sir Henry was a great collector. His collection of old blue and white Nanking had been sold years before because it grew so big he had no room for it. Dear Sir Henry, now that I look back I often wonder how, with his very full life, he bore my constant practising. One of our greatest surgeons, he gained his high reputation for the delicate operation of crushing stones in the bladder, an operation which he carried out on the King of the Belgians. Some years later, he operated on Napoleon III.

Lady Thompson and Herbert sat solemnly in the second drawing-room, and at a signal from the butler I made my appearance in my wonderful new dress, handkerchief poised in my left hand. I walked to the piano, very aware of my new frock, bowed and placed the handkerchief gracefully, as I thought,

Finale

on the piano. I played the extempore prelude, then a *Nocturne* and *Scherzo in B Minor* by Chopin. My audience applauded weakly. I bowed a little nervously and made my exit. I was called again, which meant an encore, for one had to have two "calls" at the "Pops" before giving one.

With a sense of relief, I thought it was all over. But not at all; it was only just the beginning. Lady Thompson was far from satisfied. I was corrected and corrected, my bows, my walk, my general performance. I had to go through it all again, right from the beginning! I got stupid and more stupid until at last I was almost in tears. It was bad enough to be making a *début* without all this. I finally retired to bed and worked myself into a state of nervous dread.

Dear Lady Thompson was the best friend I could possibly have had, but how Victorian and strict! The result was that I was white with terror when I arrived the next day at St James' Hall. The dressing-room was known as "the omnibus", for in those days of horse omnibuses passengers sat facing each other. The artists' room just off the platform was like this. I was fifth on the programme and we sat in that order. I was in good company. Concerts in those days were rarely the solo appearances they are today.

Joachim, Rics, Strauss and Gibson opened with a string quartette. Piatti followed, then the vocalist, after which Ilona played a Fugue of Bach-Liszt. After that Joachim went back for his solos and then I realised with absolute panic that I came next. I heard the burst of applause, the sudden silence as he prepared to give his encore, renewed clapping, and a moment later he was back in "the omnibus" putting his violin away. There was that dreadful pause while somebody opened the lid of the piano, and then a voice from a million miles away, saying, 'Miss de Lara, it is you now.'

I rose, wondering if my legs would carry me to the steps, let alone on to the platform. Perhaps I looked as terrified as I felt, for the next moment a wonderful thing happened. Joachim came to me holding out his hand.

'I'll take you on,' he smiled. I grasped his hand as though I were 'drowning. Amazement at his action made me forget my nerves; I felt tears of gratitude very near. This artist, whom the audience had just been acclaiming to the roof-tops as the greatest violinist in the world, was doing this for me! He held my hand tightly, giving me courage as we walked; then as the audience saw us mount the steps together they gave us an immense reception. Still holding my hand while I bowed to the audience at the back of the platform, the galleries and finally the floor, he led me firmly to the piano; then with a reassuring smile he had gone.

Perhaps he was reminded of his first appearance in England at the Drury Lane Theatre many years before. He played Ernst's *Fantasia* on *Otello*, which was conducted by Mendelssohn and caused a sensation. It was after this that he came to England to play regularly at the "Pops" and had endeared himself to the British public. I have often heard Clara Schumann speak of his "great unselfishness". For myself, I know that Joachim, by his kind act, gave me enormous confidence, and by this gesture endeared me to the most critical audience in the world. I would rather have died than failed him at that point. It must have shown in my playing, for when I had finished there was a great ovation; I had won the coveted "encore". To crown my happiness came yet another "call". I knew then that I had not failed Clara Schumann, Joachim or those who had helped me. I knew that I was "made", for the standard of the "Pops" was so high and the concerts famous throughout the world, that success or failure could be decided then and there.

I returned to "the omnibus" in the seventh heaven of relief and

Finale

happiness. As I sat down Joachim came to me and took both my hands. He spoke very slowly, rolling his Rs and laughing with me.

‘Now you are r-r-red; before you were ner-r-rvous—you were so white!’

I shall never forget the way he said it, or the understanding which he had shown.

Somehow I managed to convey my gratitude, then suddenly everyone was congratulating me; the concert was over. I remember Herbert Thompson collecting me; the crowds and smart carriages, the sound of horses pawing the ground, the coachmen with their whips. I drove home as talkative as I had been silent coming. I drank in Herbert’s praise, his surprise that Joachim had brought me on. He told me small scraps of praise he had overheard. I was happy, happy as I had never been. My one sadness had been that Lady Thompson could not attend, but I relived every detail for her. How kind she was, how pleased. There was champagne and sandwiches and I was allowed half a glass on this “special occasion”. . . That night I went to bed in a very different state from the night before. My head was full of dreams, my heart was full of hope. My career had started. I could hold my own in music, and was no longer just a child prodigy!



The Fruits of Success

WITH what a light heart I awoke the morning after my début; for a time I lay in bed and thought of all that had happened. I loved everybody. I wished very much it had not been a Sunday as there would be no post at breakfast and I wanted to hear from all my friends. I felt sure they would write.

‘Her Ladyship feels you should have breakfast in bed.’

The maid who looked after me arrived to draw the curtains.

‘Congratulations, Miss, everyone is saying you had a great success.’

‘Oh, thank you, Maud!’

I lay back and pictured myself with servants to wait on me, breakfast in bed every morning and lots and lots of money. For the first time I had tasted success and it was very, very sweet. I was young and not past the make-belief of youth, and for a short hour I indulged it to the full. Then of course the exuberance of youth bubbled over, I leapt out of bed, had a cold bath and dressed myself in my prettiest frock. Everyone was so kind that day, Sir Henry said how happy I had made his wife. Herbert seemed to look at me with new eyes—and was annoyed when Bert came to tea.

‘I can’t think what you see in that fella!’ he grumbled after Bert had gone.

Finale

'He is very handsome!' I answered, suddenly realizing that Herbert was jealous. I was fast becoming aware of men's interest, and that perhaps, in accepting Bert who had aroused my first pangs, I had been a little hasty. I knew I was not really in love with him, but in Frankfurt he had seemed more romantic; he was someone from England, and it had caused quite an impression amongst my fellow students to become engaged at sixteen and wear a diamond solitaire!

'Adelina——' I was suddenly aware that Herbert was looking seriously at me. But I knew I did not want Herbert to be serious; he would be fun to flirt with, nothing more.

'If I get up early, do you think I dare peep at the papers before your father? Suppose the critics hate me?' I diverted his thoughts.

The following morning, braving the wrath of Sir Henry, I got up early and rushed to learn my fate at the hands of the critics. I searched wildly through the *Daily Telegraph*, tearing it in my agitation.

Joseph Bennett, the leading critic, wrote for it. If he was merciful I could breathe again. But when at last I found it I could not believe he was writing about me. I read it three times over before it really sank in!

Feverishly I made an onslaught upon *The Times*. Would Fuller-Maitland be quite so kind? Yes, there it was in black-and-white. I sat on the floor amongst a tangle of newspapers, my eyes shining, my heart too full for words:

'Miss Adelina de Lara, who before going to Frankfurt had been instructed to good purpose by Miss Fanny Davies, has evidently very remarkable musical instinct, artistic intelligence, and a finished technique.

As to her playing in concerted music, or in the severer masterpieces of the classical school, it is impossible to speak,

for she was heard only in Chopin's *Nocturne in C sharp Minor* and his *Scherzo in B Minor*, both of which she played with great feeling and romantic expression. As an encore she gave a transcription of Jensen's pretty song *Murmelndes Luftchen* in which her cantabile touch was well exhibited.'

(*The Times*, 23rd March, 1891)

'Really, Adclina!' I came back to earth with a jolt and found myself looking up into the outraged eyes of Sir Henry.

'I suppose only a woman is capable of making such a tangle of a newspaper, let alone two, when she becomes really excited.'

'Oh—please forgive me——' I scrambled from my unladylike position on the floor, one sheet of the paper still clutched in my hand. Then suddenly I think he remembered and realized and he began to laugh; the next moment we were both laughing as we tried to put the wreckage together.

'It's the critics—I had forgotten! How are they?' He was all kindness and as eager to see as I had been.

'Wonderful! Quite wonderful!'

Together we pored over them again; then Herbert joined us and Sir Henry read them both out aloud and they sounded even better. Not only that, there were letters from the Priestleys and Johnstones, Fanny Davics, and my first fan letters. Later Lady Thompson sent for me and I read the reviews and the letters all through to her.

Soon engagements began to come in. My next was for the Crystal Palace, that strange ornate glass building, for the Saturday Orchestral Concerts. Sir August Manns was the conductor. He also, through Clara Schumann's introduction, engaged me without an audition.

I found him so charming. He wore a black velvet coat and white kid gloves, and had a flowing white moustache.

Finale

At this concert I was to play Rubinstein's *D Minor Concerto*, and my fellow artists were Ysaye, the Belgian violinist, and Nordica, the American soprano. All went well at the rehearsal. I was feeling happy and confident when at last I took my place at the piano. Then, as I began to play, I found, to my horror, that not one, but *four*, notes of the magnificent Broadwood piano were dumb! They were the middle D, E, F and G. Of course I was aware of Sir August looking at me in sudden doubt at my beginning. All I could do was to stop playing, which caused a slight stir amongst the audience. Sir August quickly laid down his baton and came to me as I hastily explained.

'I'll do my best but will have to alter some notes,' I said boldly. To this he agreed and at once explained my predicament to the vast audience. They applauded their approval, and we carried on, but it was no light task and a fearful ordeal for me.

Robert Hichens and Bernard Shaw were among the critics. I quote the young Bernard Shaw's criticism from *The World*:

'Miss Adelina de Lara was hampered by a bad pianoforte. Broadwood is not the right maker for a touch like hers; probably Pleyel would suit her better. The particular Broadwood in question so resented her handling that it ruptured a hammer and stopped the performance. When after much disconsolate contemplation of the interior of the instrument by everyone in the neighbourhood, she consented to proceed with one note dumb, the maimed member extemporised a castanet and tambourine accompaniment by clattering and jingling among the strings. Although it was fortunate that the music was not of the slightest interest, being pure Rubinstein from beginning to end, so that Miss de Lara, in giving a convincing display of strength and dexterity, was doing all that she could have done in any case with such a composition.'

Fuller-Maitland also wrote of me in *The Times*:

‘Rubinstein’s *D Minor Concerto* was played by Miss Adelina de Lara, the latest of Madame Clara Schumann’s pupils, who recently made a successful first appearance at the Popular Concerts. In spite of a somewhat serious *contretemps* caused by the breaking of one of the hammers, the player did her best and contrived to produce a good deal of effect. Her technical dexterity is very remarkable and in the qualities of vigour and beauty of tone her performance left little to be desired. Happily another opportunity is soon to be afforded of hearing this promising artist at the concert announced by the Bach Choir on May 12th.’

Strange that these critics thought only one note was dumb!

The audience gave me a terrific ovation and August Manns embraced me, as he was always to do when I played at the Palace. I often appeared there playing concertos by Beethoven (*The Emperor*), Schumann, Chopin, Saint-Saens, and again Rubinstein on the day of his death in 1894. Manns telegraphed for me to come along and I played without a rehearsal.

This also happened with the Schumann Concerto. Otto Hegner was taken suddenly ill and again August Manns called on me to play without a rehearsal. This is always something of a strain for any pianist, but evidently, as the following notice shows, I did not show it:

CRYSTAL PALACE

‘Sudden illness prevented Otto Hegner from appearing but the audience were no losers by that, for Miss Adelina de Lara, who took his place at exceedingly short notice, played Schumann’s Concerto in a manner which, it is not too much to say, entitles her to a place among the world’s greatest living

Finale

pianists. Putting aside the facts that the work was played without rehearsal and on a piano strange to the player, the performance was one of quite exceptional excellence, nor was anything to be desired in the intellectual grasp, poetry of conception, or technical dexterity.' (The Times, 1892.)

In the middle of all this Lady Thompson arranged for me to go as paying guest to two elderly spinsters who kept a toy-shop in Baker Street. She could not be expected to house me indefinitely, and I expect she had noticed Herbert was beginning to "wilt". Perhaps she thought it would be better for us both while I persisted in my engagement to Bert. At first I was rather elated at the idea of being "independent", and of living on my own. My room was charming and the old ladies sweet; I only paid two guineas a week for every comfort and all the Victorian knick-knacks, framed texts and the like which decorated my rooms. It had been agreed that a private horse-drawn brougham should always be there to take me about. The coachman was an old dear and kept a fatherly eye on me. Wrapped up, with his rug round his knees, and sometimes his fingers blue with cold, he used to wait patiently for me.

My wardrobe, too, was well looked after and I was given lovely clothes. There I was, a young girl, with money to spend and already a popular pianist; but one big thing was missing in my life. I had no home of my own. Pen had gone to Frankfurt to teach English and live with a Jewish family named Etlinger. It was there that Landon Ronald met his future wife, Mimi Etlinger. To make up for what I missed I flung myself into a whirl of parties, but in spite of these, recitals, my concert engagements, the excitement of buying more and more clothes, life was a little flat when I returned to my rooms. More than likely the old ladies had retired to bed and there was no one with whom to share my

enthusiasms. Bert Priestley, sensing this, pressed for an early marriage, but the mere thought threw me into a panic. I knew now I could never marry him, yet I hated to hurt him. I think what I wanted just then was someone to mother me a little. I was just beginning to feel my feet, men were becoming rather interesting and parties were frequent.

Sir Alexander Mackenzie, Principal of the Royal Academy of Music, happened just then to suggest that I should examine for him at the Academy. Using this as an excuse to Bert, I worked from ten in the morning to six at night but found it rather trying to have to listen to the same piece again and again. On one occasion it was the Chopin *Fantasia in F Minor* and by the end of the day I wished he had never written it! I remember Dora Bright, who already was making her name as a composer, was my fellow examiner that day, and one of the students was Gertrude Peppercorn.

The next time Bert came up to London he asked me to go to tea with some friends of his named Howell. It was at the home of Edward Howell (at that time perhaps the greatest English 'cellist and teacher) that Bert was staying.

For some reason I did not want to go. I felt it would be boring; but he looked so crestfallen that I relented. I found the whole family enchanting, and poor Bert little realised where this meeting would lead. Edward Howell teased me about the toy-shop over which I lived and we laughed at the spinster sisters. I felt at home and happy and was aware that a mutual affection had sprung up between us all. Mrs Howell was so kind, so motherly and interested in everything about me. At last, with reluctance, I rose to leave them.

'Why not come to live with us?'

Edward Howell asked the question as I was about to shake hands. For a moment I thought he was joking, then I saw him

Finale

look quite seriously at his wife. For some reason my heart missed a beat.

‘There is a room you could have. Come and see it!’

Hardly believing this was happening, we all went upstairs into a large airy sitting-room.

‘But this is wonderful. Could I put my Broadwood Grand here?’ I moved round the room full of excitement.

‘Wherever you like—it is all yours!’

Edward Howell laughed. He seemed as excited as I. For a second our eyes met. Immediately some ‘instinct made me almost refuse, but I pushed it hastily aside.

‘I would adore to come!’

Before we left everything, including the terms, was arranged. I was in a seventh heaven of delight as I walked back with Bert. The next day I rushed round and told Lady Thompson of my new-found friends and plans.

‘But Adelina, I do not like the idea. I would rather you remained where you are. Far better not to get involved with a family about whom you know so little.’

I pouted and argued, wept and begged and gradually wore her down. She did not, and could not, know how I longed and longed to be one of a family just like this.

Once I had gained her unwilling consent I made arrangements to move as quickly as possible. The Howells owned a house in Canfield Gardens, but they liked change apparently and had taken 1 Nottingham Place furnished. It had a double drawing-room with a Grand piano lent to them by the firm with whom he was under contract. Edward Howell was principal ‘cellist at Covent Garden and also ‘cellist to Queen Victoria. He had a beautiful ‘cello which had belonged to Handel.

It was a red-letter day when I moved in. I think the spinster sisters were quite sorry to see me go; I had, I suppose, brought a

little glamour into their well-ordered lives! I arrived with my trunks, the brougham groaning under the weight and the poor horse slightly aggrieved. The whole family was there to meet me, including the Howells' two extremely good-looking sons. All of them gathered in my room eager to help me unpack and hang the few photographs and pictures which I brought from Germany. How we laughed and chattered—it was all so friendly and happy. My signed photographs of the Schumanns took special place. Later in one of my moves they “vanished”. The Grand piano arrived; it had to be got up three flights of stairs but at last was safely in place. Tea was brought in and while Mrs Howell unpacked and admired my frocks we re-arranged my room and drank cups of tea. That night I went to sleep happy and contented. I was with an unconventional musical family who seemed to love me and whom I already loved, and no longer would I return to an empty room and nobody to fuss over me.

The next morning I was invited downstairs to “elevenses” which took the form of hock and biscuits. I was exactly twenty and except for a sip of champagne with the Thompsons had never drunk alcohol. They teased me when I refused, so of course I got reckless and took up the challenge. I did not like it at first, but soon changed my mind—that is, until I realised it “got into my fingers”. After that I was very careful and took only a little.

Life became full of excitement, with parties every Sunday when all sorts of people dropped in. Musicians, actors, artists, and all of them made a fuss of me. How susceptible I was! It was at the first musical Sunday that Edward Howell played, and though I had had much experience with 'cellists, Piatti, Davidoff, Cosmann and many others, the moment I heard him I realized that never had I heard a finer or better musician. I was

Finale

entirely enthralled, carried away. I dared not look at him because I was afraid he would see in my eyes that he had awoken in me the love that should have been Bert's. It was quite different to any emotion I had ever felt before, and had I been wise I would have fled back to my spinster ladies, or back to the protection of Lady Thompson.



The First Cloud

LIFE was not quite the easy uncomplicated affair I had pictured it when I first entered the household of the Howells. As the weeks wore on amid music and gaiety, and I hid my infatuation for Edward, one thing became clear in my mind—I must break off my engagement. It was not fair to Bert² to let him go on clinging to me. Poor Bert, I think he must have known that I had never really been in love with him, but it came as a shock to him just the same. It made me miserable, because now I understood that if he felt about me as I was feeling about Edward, he would be very hurt indeed. I hated returning the lovely diamond ring and the other things he had given me, but it had to be done, and only then did I feel free. Free—free for what? But I was happy to work and play with Edward, to be with those he loved and whom I loved too.

He delighted in my playing, as I in his. Soon engagements were coming in for me, and I was also playing with him all over England. Then there were more “Pops”, and I soon found I was too busy to give way to my “pinings”; besides, half the time I was with the cause of my emotional upheaval. At least I could be near him, see him every day, share music with him. The only thing we fell out over was my practising; Edward was a born

.Finale

genius and never practised, and as he sought out my company more and more he used to complain.

'You've been over that a dozen times. Stop it; you'll be as right as rain.'

But in this I was conscientious and used to turn a deaf ear, much to his annoyance.

The first of three concerts at the Steinway Hall at which I played with Edward Howell, the *Daily Telegraph* reported as follows:

'Miss de Lara will produce, for the first time in England, Schumann's *Andante* and *Variations* for two pianofortes, two violoncellos, and horn. This most interesting novelty was printed about a year ago, and thanks are due to the present concert giver for so soon undertaking to make it known.

Her more serious efforts, however, were made, with Mr Howell, in Beethoven's G Minor Sonata for the two instruments, and in the E Minor of Brahms. It was a treat to hear these artists play with absolute unity of purpose and command of all sufficient means.'

One of my greatest joys when I had no concerts was the Opera at Covent Garden. Mrs Howell had a free box for the season and we went as often as possible. Everyone dressed, jewels sparkled, we were as gay off stage as on. The orchestra was led by Carrodus, a very popular violinist, and Edward Howell led the 'cellos. Never shall I forget those nights, when the de Reszkes and Melba appeared in *Romeo and Juliet* or when Melba broke our hearts in *La Bohème*. I was at the first performance, a terrific Melba night. Then there was Calvé, full of temperament and fire! I was at her first appearance in *Carmen* and *Cavalleria Rusticana*. She never acted the same way twice, but as she felt at the moment. She was a glorious singer and a lovely woman, but she was fat. Edward told me how trying she was at rehearsals,

especially when one morning she decided that the Toreador was to carry her off the stage after her dance! He most ungallantly and flatly refused. This brought forth a storm of fury and indignation from her. She stamped her foot, refusing to sing another note. In vain the producer, the director, everyone tried to reason with her. Calvé was adamant and the rehearsal was called off. Somehow, off-stage, peace was restored between the two singers.

When I sat in the front row of the stalls I was often joined by Sir Augustus Harris, Director of the Opera. He joined me one night after the first act of *Carmen*.

‘Watching your face from the wings gives me more interest than the opera, you show such intense joy!’

‘I feel it,’ I whispered back. ‘Calvé makes me mad with enthusiasm.’

Those were great days for me, the early 'nineties, I was experiencing so many things and meeting so many people. I liked male homage, especially when I noticed Edward did not like it! Life was never dull and I lived in a whirl of dinner-parties, receptions, dances. Sometimes at breakfast Mrs Howell would make a suggestion.

‘Ted, let’s go into town and have lunch.’

So after I had finished practising we would sally forth and take a horse bus, which had straw on the floor and was quite small. The driver sat high up and would crack his whip and away we went, drawn by a pair of horses which were in no particular hurry. We might lunch at an Italian restaurant in Soho over a bottle of red wine, and the manager would always give us each a flower.

Then we would stroll about and look at the shops or go to a *matinée*. I think Mrs Howell, with the intuition of a woman, had guessed my “secret”, but her nature was not jealous and

Finale

she must have known her Edward. He was a fascinating man of fifty, quite old enough to be my father. But, of course, the day came when I discovered he was in love with me—had been, he declared, from the moment he met me. Naturally it turned my head; I was radiantly, fantastically happy for a long time.

Lady Thompson, in spite of the fact she did not approve of the life I was living, often invited me to her musical parties. On one of these occasions she had a serious talk with me. Perhaps she hoped to bring me to my senses.

‘Why not marry Herbert?’ she suggested.

‘Herbert!’ I was slightly taken aback. I had almost forgotten Herbert.

‘Yes, he is in love with you. He will be wealthy and a baronet one day, Adeline.’ Mother-like, she praised her son.

‘But—but I am not in love with him,’ I faltered.

‘That will come, my dear—it will give you prestige—it will make him very happy.’

Then of course, much as I hated to hurt her, I had to confess I loved someone else. She was kind, and we talked together then more openly than we ever had, and I left her with a good deal to think over. But the Howells’ sympathy, especially Edward’s when I told them about Herbert and hurting Lady Thompson, soon made me forget all her wise counsel. I continued to live in my fool’s paradise. Then the first cloud gathered on the horizon. I discovered the Howells were always in debt. In spite of the fact that Mrs Howell personally had quite a lot of money, and Edward earned an enormous amount, they had been living a long time above their joint incomes.

To my horror tradesmen began to call demanding their money. The butcher alone was owed over seventy pounds, and the others were pretty well as bad. In vain would the maids come up with messages.

‘Tell him I am busy—make him go away.’ Mrs Howell would hardly raise her eyes from her book. Edward would shut his with a bang and go out.

At last I could bear it no longer and I offered to lend her fifty pounds—a mere drop in the ocean, but for a time it eased things a little. Yet still the parties and constant entertaining went on. Then came for me a far worse thing. Edward, whom I suppose was really worried, began to drink. He seemed almost to turn against me. In vain I pleaded and begged; once he had started nothing seemed to stop him. I could not endure to see him like that. After bouts he would become ill, lying for days in bed, drinking only milk and soda.

Then fate was kind. In the midst of it all I was booked for some concert tours by my agent Daniel Mayer. He sent me first on one of Madame Albani’s tours. Madame Patti would not have me because my christian name was the same as hers!’

It was quite exciting to tour with so well-known an opera singer, and it did much to restore my self-esteem. Her greatest role was Elsa in *Lohengrin*. Wherever she went she was greatly acclaimed, and the public crowded round her carriage as she left the concert hall; there were flowers and gifts and she looked magnificent. The halls, of course, were crowded.

David Popper and Ben Davies were also with us. The latter was so kind and dear to me. We went first to Scotland and crossed the Forth Bridge in a blizzard, reaching Aberdeen about midnight, to be regaled with hot broth.

After Scotland, we went to Dublin where I had an unpleasant experience. When I arrived at the Concert Hall, Broadwood’s tuner, who was travelling with my piano, told me the concert organizer had refused to allow my piano on the platform. It was usual for pianists to have their own pianos at concerts and I was under contract to play on Broadwoods and had, therefore, to

Finale

refuse to play. There was a grand commotion. Albani threw her arms round my neck and the organiser implored me to go on. I remained as firm as a rock, backed up by my tuner. I was then asked just to "show myself" to the audience and had consented when my tuner rushed in, took my arm and insisted I should leave. I was upset and excited, but guessed something serious was afoot and went with him. In the cab he explained that a speech had already been made, giving quite the wrong reasons why I would not play, and that he feared booing and a bad reception from the audience if I had appeared. Upset as I was, I was grateful for his help. Broadwoods' later wrote a wonderful letter to the Dublin papers, explaining my difficulty. They pointed out that I was 'a most gracious and modest artist' and that the speech was 'unjust and uncalled for'. So ended an unpleasant incident. I have never played in Dublin since.

David Popper and I played a sonata together at a Monday "Pop" after we returned and I was the soloist at the same concert. David was the husband of the pianist Sophie Menter. She was Russian and was always loaded with jewels and medals, many of which were given to her by the Czar. She had a marvellous technique and enormous power and was a very handsome woman.

Joseph Bennett, critic of the *Daily Telegraph*, was very kind to me, and he used to invite me to his parties, where one met everybody—actors, actresses, musicians and so on. One of the letters from him is, I think, worth quoting. It is dated 3rd April, 1895:

Dear Miss de Lara,

In Gloucester (my native place almost) there is a choral society of which I am president—not exactly a nominal one because from time to time I ask some of my artist-friends to go down and play or sing at the closing event of the

Left: I was twenty-four when Emily Harding made this crayon drawing of me.



Below: Grieg and his wife, Niala, were also staying with the Johnstones for the Birmingham Musical Festival.



her style of playing the restrained but finished method of her illustrious German teacher is, happily, distinctly traceable, and the success which attended the young artist's London debut led to her subsequent speedy appearance at the Crystal Palace Concerts, at one of the Concerts of the Bach Choir, and at many of the leading Concerts in our principal provincial towns. During the present season opportunity has been presented, at the Popular Concerts, of estimating the



MISS ADELINA DE LARA.

Further progress the young lady has made in her art; and quite recently, in the enforced absence, owing to sudden illness, of Master Otto Hegner from one of the Saturday Afternoon Concerts at the Crystal Palace, Miss De Lara appeared in his stead, and at almost a moment's notice, and, of course, without previous rehearsal, essayed Schumann's Pianoforte Concerto, which she played with such facility of execution, breadth of style, and artistic perception, as to call for the heartiest approval. Miss De Lara, in short, has given earnest of a most successful career, and promises soon to become one of our leading pianists.

I would always rush to the newspapers the morning after a concert. This review appeared in the *Queen* of April 1892.

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season, the Society doing the hospitable and paying expenses. It might not be wholly useless for you to play a couple of solos at the concert to be given on April 30th. Are you engaged that day and if not will you go? I know this is a bold request; but I venture it and am asking Mr Howell also. Would Mr and Mrs Howell accept an invitation? It might be a pleasant trip for you. We usually have a jolly time.

Kindly reply at your earliest convenience and believe that in any case you have a sincere well-wisher in—

Yours very sincerely,

JOSEPH BENNETT

This honour was accepted and appreciated. We stayed at a pleasant old hotel in Gloucester where the old coach-and-four would enter the courtyard. The bedrooms were approached from outside stairs, and this reminded me of Frankfurt. The concert proved a big success; the whole atmosphere was delightful, almost a personal affair, for Joseph Bennett was well known in the surrounding district. The choral society had very keen supporters, and it seemed as if everybody's friends and relations from miles around had turned out to make their closing concert a great success.

This time I was playing on a Steinway and I remember feeling a little uneasy until it arrived. The moving of a piano in those days was not the easy task it is now, when it can go all the way by road. Instead it would have to travel by train and then depend for delivery upon a horse-drawn vehicle. Slippery roads, snow or fog used to cause me many an uneasy moment. However, everything went without a hitch. The choral society sang excellently. Mr Howell and I played a sonata, then we played solos—I chose *Romanze in F sharp and B flat Minor* by Schumann and a *Ballade* by Chopin.

Finale

Many people crowded into the dressing-room afterwards to express their appreciation. What I call dressing-room "nerves" are the same today as they were then. Strangers shake one warmly by the hand, then are seized by a sudden form of mental paralysis and ask the most absurd questions.

'Does playing make your fingers ache?' is one of the most usual; I have been asked this countless times! My fingers have never ached in my life. The muscles in one's arms, yes; but never the fingers, it would be fatal. I wonder if ballet-dancers are asked if their toes ache! Another favourite question is what piano I prefer. If I tell them, they then say: 'Is that the best make?' or some such remark. That is not the reason at all—because one writes with a certain nib does not mean it is the best in the world. It just happens to suit one's handwriting!

At just about this time Fuller-Maitland wrote to me and expressed his delight that I was 'cured of my recent preference for Erard pianos and am playing on a Steinway'. He added 'that perhaps my old appreciation for Broadwoods would return'. It did not. I admire and respect, however, all these great pianos, but Steinways and Blüthners have always been my favourites. It is merely a matter of what suits one's touch and technique.

My concerts at the Crystal Palace were bringing me in contact with many musicians of note. Sir George Grove, secretary to the Crystal Palace and the first Director of the Royal College of Music, told me he had started life as an engineer but his love of music had proved too great a fascination and he gave all his time to organising the performances at the Crystal Palace. It was no mean task. Now, he is best remembered for the *Dictionary of Music and Musicians* of which he was Editor. I found him always most kind and helpful.

I was asked to take part in a Bach Choir concert which Villiers Stanford was conducting. When I went to the rehearsal he greeted

me with all the charm of an Irishman and asked if I had been at Headingly recently. He talked to me of some of his compositions. These were most prolific, but it was not until 1910 that he published *Songs of the Fleet* which became one of his most popular works with the British public. Much later, of course, it was he who set the words of Mr Justice Darling's *At the Abbey Gate* for the burial of the Unknown Warrior.

I played Beethoven's *Thirty-two Variations* and Bach's *D Minor Concerto*. I can even remember the dress I wore on this occasion. I had recently taken to wearing white, which has been a favourite with me all my life. The dress was a lovely brocaded satin with the then fashionable high sleeves. I was earning good money and could afford to be extravagant, and I still received money from my generous patrons. It has always been one of my faults to spend with no thought for the future—a failing common among artists!

Herbert Thompson came to hear me and I think was impressed, for he went back and told his mother I had become 'quite the fashionable young lady'!

Another exciting engagement followed. I was asked to play the Schumann Concerto at one of the Hallé Concerts in Manchester, and not only that, but Sir Charles Hallé was to conduct! I was invited to stay for a week with a family called Kissell, for as was usual in those days, someone would always offer hospitality and visiting artists were rarely permitted to shut themselves away in an hotel. The Kissells were cousins of Mendelssohn. It was for their mother and father he composed the famous *Wedding March*. Their house, Mobberley Hall, Cheshire, was some distance from Manchester. They had a beautiful organ in the great hall and a superb piano for me to practise on. How I enjoyed that week! Wandering in their grounds, being waited on and pampered and sitting and playing in one of their vast rooms.

Finale

The day of the concert arrived and I drove all the way to Manchester in the Kissells' carriage-and-pair up to the Free Trade Hall. A rest-room in an hotel had been booked for me, but I went to the Free Trade Hall direct, and there it was I met the beloved Sir Charles Hallé for the first time. He had only recently been knighted and also married the delightful violinist Wilhelmina Norman-Neruda. I was enchanted at once by his manner. He had known Liszt and Chopin and Georges Sand. He took the Schumann first and I shall never forget his conducting of the Schumann Concerto. No one, not even Richter, has ever quite achieved the extreme delicacy from the orchestra in certain phrases as he did. Of course I was nervous when I began, but soon, under his baton for the first time, all my usual nervousness left me. At the end he was genuinely delighted with my interpretation. Then, when later I rehearsed my solo, a *Nocturne* in the *A Flat Ballade* of Chopin, he sat close to the keyboard and watched my hands. This I did find rather an ordeal, for I knew what a wonderful pianist he was, but I was very happy, and he was very kind so it really did not worry me greatly.

After the rehearsal I went to my hotel to rest, and I returned to the hall feeling elated.

For me it was a gala concert; the house was smart, "the county" was there; it was a really musical house and the atmosphere was alive and uplifting. I responded and played the Schumann better than I had ever played it, for there are times when one feels in complete unity with a conductor. I was called back repeatedly, and the Kissells sent me a beautiful bouquet which I imagine their head gardener had made. The flowers from the hot-houses were so fragrant and so beautiful, I can almost smell them now! Unfortunately, back in the dressing-room, the singer Mr Charles Santley became very temperamental over them!

"The perfume, it is too strong—it will upset my voice!"

'But they are so beautiful!' I held them towards him so that he could at least admire them.

'Take them away—please—out of the room.' He backed away from me as if I were offering him a scorpion!

By then I was extremely annoyed. The flowers were giving me great pleasure and I did not want my happiness spoilt, but out of the room they had to go. We glared at each other—which seemed to make him more agitated still—until he went on to sing. However, nothing could really spoil the evening for me. The concert over, I drove back with the Kissells who helped me to the carriage through the waiting crowds. On the way home my host and hostess told me they were arranging a dinner party in my honour.

'People want to meet you,' they told me. Of course I offered to play to their guests, for this was usual in those days, and they were highly delighted. A few nights later when I went to my room to change for the party I found a tiny packet on my dressing table. Unwrapping it, I found an exquisite brooch, a bar of diamonds, in the centre of which was a large pear-shaped pearl. There was also a message which touched me deeply.

'As an expression of gratitude for the great pleasure you are going to give us this evening.'

I regret to say this lovely gift was stolen only a few weeks later when I was playing in Birmingham. The brooch was but one of many jewels I have lost during my travels. I used to receive many valuable presents, for artists were very spoilt in those days.

I only saw my hosts once again, many years later. They passed out of my life as so many have done. The constant travel makes personal contacts difficult; one is always moving on, meeting fresh people, not always returning to the same place or perhaps not for many years. Yet most of those with whom I came into contact I always remember with gratitude.



Marriage

SOON after my return to London I met some people named Hecht who lived in Hampstead. I happened to mention that I had just been to see a play called *For the Crown* in which Mrs Patrick Campbell was appearing with Forbes-Robertson. It was playing to packed houses at the Lyceum.

‘If you are an admirer of hers you must come to the dinner we are giving to celebrate the success of the play,’ Mrs Hecht laughed.

‘Then you know her?’ I could hardly believe my ears.

‘Very well indeed; come along and you shall meet her.’

Of course I was overjoyed. I had also seen Mrs Patrick Campbell in *The Second Mrs Tanqueray*. She had caused a great sensation in a wonderful dress she wore. It was black and gold, with a long train, with gold chains across her bare arms and shoulders. I seem to visualise great gold flowers on black. She had a magnificent presence on the stage and was very lovely, and wore her jet-black hair in a loose coil on her neck, and had large dark eyes. Other members of the cast were also invited to this party: Cyril Maude, Winifred Emery, Forbes-Robertson and his brother, besides other guests. Mrs Pat kept us waiting quite half an hour, which was sad for a hostess when one remembers that a dinner in those days consisted of seven or eight courses!

Of course the great actress made a dramatic entrance, full of regret and apologies. Her golden voice had almost a sob in it as she gave her lovely hands to Mrs Hecht and raised her passionate eyes with their curling lashes. Her face was always pale and her lips scarlet. We stood around and gasped! She was dressed in the gown of *The Second Mrs Tanqueray*.

It took down my conceit. I felt insignificant before this dazzling beauty, in my poor little white silk frock, with my hair bound by blue satin ribbon.

I sat between Forbes-Robertson, the idol of all the females, and Mr Patrick Campbell, Mrs Pat's husband. The dinner table looked superb; in the centre was an enormous crown of flowers, the menu cards were in the shape of crowns, and at the end of a veritable banquet, came a great crown of ice cream in many colours. Mrs Pat had to cut it first. There was champagne and other wines, but as I knew I had to play afterwards I kept my life-long rule of no alcohol before playing. It has meant many sacrifices but it is worth it. Later in the evening I was asked to play the famous *C Sharp Minor Prelude* of Rachmaninoff. As I was the first pianist to perform this work at the Crystal Palace it was a natural request. I played several other pieces. Mrs Pat, to my delight, came and talked to me for quite a while and later Forbes-Robertson, who was charming, rejoined me. We were having a brief flirtation when suddenly I saw him stiffen. Mrs Pat was watching us from across the room! He rose, bowed and with a muttered 'Excuse me' returned to her side. He never left it for the rest of the evening!

My engagements increased during the following year, and I was playing continually in London and the provinces. I went up to Scotland again, with Sir August Manns and his orchestra, and in Edinburgh I had the joy of playing the Schumann Concerto. I returned to Birmingham and played there. I was

Finale

happy to be able to prove that they had not been mistaken in me.

The months seemed to hurry by and develop into years. Edward withdrew more and more into himself. Perhaps it was because I seemed no longer able to reach him that I turned my attention to his son Charles, who showed more interest in me each time I returned from a tour.

Youth can be very cruel. I know that my change of heart must have hurt Edward very much. He must have missed my adoration and devotion and, although I still loved him in a different way, I had recovered from the agony he had caused me.

Charles Howell, the eldest son, was an actor and very good-looking. He proposed often, and one day, I imagine in exasperation, I accepted him! The moment I had, however, I realized the mistake I had made. He was terribly jealous and objected strongly to my concert tours. Altogether the atmosphere was far from happy. Each time I returned from a tour Charles was sulky, Edward was "suffering" and Mrs Howell was struggling with more and more debt. I suppose nothing is more devastating than a disturbed domestic atmosphere. In despair I suggested to Mrs Howell I should hand her over all my earnings. I was making a good deal of money—in fact, the world was my oyster. Mrs Howell of course readily agreed to my suggestion, with the understanding she both clothed and fed me. As a result we left Nottingham Place and returned to their own house in Hampstead and gave more and more parties.

It was at one of these parties that Charles introduced me to Thomas. 'Adelina, I want you to meet the world's worst actor, Thomas Kingston.'

By the way he said it, I knew he meant the opposite. To my surprise he left us to ourselves. I asked Kingston all about his acting, and what he was doing.

'I'll give you a resumé,' he laughed into my eyes. 'I am engaged

to the enchanting Ellaline Terriss, and I am just off to America, where I hope to attain fame and fortune.'

We passed the evening happily in each other's company. I was charmed by him—but after we parted did not think of him again.

Sometimes I escaped to the Thompsons, for by now I had come to look upon their house as a refuge. It was well ordered, there was a sense of values and no money troubles. At the Howells' things went from bad to worse; even my earnings failed to keep pace with the many bills. We moved again to a house in St George's Square, Regent's Park. As it was large it seemed to add to expenses and its shadow always hung over me.

In spite of debts there seemed no reason in the Howells' minds why we should not take holidays. For one we went to Dartmouth, and there seemed to snatch back the carefree days of our first meeting. The same happened at Boulogne, where I had beginner's luck at the Casino. From this was developed an idea in which we were all to retire from music and to live in Devonshire or Boulogne! I still visited the Opera and Edward still held his position, but his health was deteriorating. The weakness which for a time he had overcome was becoming worse. Life, which because of my career should really have been so happy, was becoming increasingly difficult. Charles could not rest until he tore me from my music.

'You can be a companion to mother and teach until we can afford to get married.'

The outlook was black indeed, especially as by now I realized I had made yet another mistake. I broke off my engagement.

Young as I was, I saw the foolishness of the plan. For me to give up the chance of a brilliant career which had been well launched was madness. Not only that, Edward Howell was still in the most enviable position professionally, and it was madness for him also. Unfortunately as he became slacker he tried to influence me. From the weight of it all I think I was almost

Finale.

prepared to give way. I was so involved in their lives that what happened to them affected me too. Torn with doubt and anxiety as I was, it was at this juncture that chance intervened.

Edward had a sister of whom I was very fond and she was desperately ill. We had a friend in common named Alice, a cousin, who asked me one Saturday in June to go with her to enquire after aunt Fanny and to wait while she did so. We walked there and she left me in the busy Marylebone High Street while she went in. Only one visitor at a time was allowed. I became bored and walked up and down, looking at the shops; still no Alice. I became angry and was just going home when I heard a charming cultured voice.

‘Surely you are Miss de Lara?’

I turned and saw a handsome young man, whom I did not recognise at once, for he wore a moustache.

‘It is Miss de Lara?’

Then I recognised him.

‘You are Tommy Kingston! But I thought you were in America.’

‘I was, but I have just returned from a most successful tour with Frohman in the States. I am now playing lead with Olga Nether-sole at the Lyric before I go again.’

I can see us now in the midst of that hurrying crowd and still hear Tommy’s voice.

‘We open on Monday night with Clement Scott’s play of *Carmen*. You must come and see it. Are you still at Hampstead—may I call tomorrow? I am no longer engaged to Ellaline Terriss; she threw me over for Seymour Hicks.’ He seemed to be talking for the sake of talking.

‘We have moved to St George’s Square—we still have our Sundays. Come along, we shall all like to see you.’

Just then Alice hurried up full of aunt Fanny, who had had such a bad turn that she had been forced to wait until the paroxysm

was over. I wasn't angry any more, and parted from Tommy Kingston with regret. He turned up next day, however, and asked me to go and see the play during the week. I did; it was a most impassioned piece of acting and Tommy's playing of Don José fascinated me. After the play I waited for him and he took me home in a hansom cab. His sister invited me to supper the following Sunday—their mother had recently died. The family consisted of two sisters, his father and a brother, all of whom I felt were scrutinising me closely. I suppose I must have been approved of, for Tommy proposed to me on the way home under a lamp-post on Primrose Hill. There was a policeman on duty near by and I am sure he was most entertained by our extraordinary conversation.

'I want you to go with me to America,' he began.

'What as?' I replied.

'What as?' said Tommy in a loud voice. 'Why, as my wife, of course, you little fool. What do you think?'

'Oh,' said I, slightly flustered. 'I don't know.'

'You *don't know!*'

'No, I don't know—I must think about it.'

'Well, you will like New York. You get suppers after the show at Munchenheimer's on Broadway, broiled lobsters, oysters and things like that, washed down with champagne.'

He was becoming more and more romantic! But I began to listen and take notice.

'Can I play in New York, do you think?—lobster sounds good. I love lobsters; as for oysters——!'

At that Tommy asked the constable to whistle for a cab and before I reached home I was engaged once more! We had somewhat of a tussle about the actual marrying.

'We'll be engaged and I will marry you when you come home,' I promised sweetly.

Finale

'No, you don't. I know all about your engagements; you marry me now or never.'

This took the wind out of my sails and I reluctantly fixed the wedding date for 31st July, 1896.

I broke the news to the Howells and they took it very badly. They did everything they could to dissuade me from such a serious step. So did Sir August Manns, who was furious. He felt it might stop my career and said I was very foolish. However, I was firm. Although I did not love Tommy, I liked him very much and respected him enormously. I knew he was a good, high-principled man, and would make me a kind husband and look after me, and I loved travelling. I longed to see the world and here was my opportunity. In the end Mrs Howell seemed to realize the benefit to me and she helped me with my clothes, for I had no money of my own, having handed it all to her. Edward took it badly. He felt my going dreadfully and drank more than ever. It was all painful to me and I felt very cruel. However, he did surprisingly consent to give me away.

Invitations had been sent out and the eve of the wedding arrived. A cousin of my fiancé's was to be best man and he had lent me his new brougham. I ought to have been very happy and excited, but the Howells chose to sulk and went to their room early, so I was miserable. Alice saved the situation by bringing in a cousin of whom I was very fond. He told me to cheer up, we drank beer to celebrate and he said I was doing the right thing. We did our best to make merry—a little more beer, kisses and so to bed.

I was married at the church in Regent's Park. Tommy was a Catholic, but agreed to a Church of England service. I wore a white silk dress with a large white hat trimmed with ostrich feathers and covered with a chiffon veil, and I carried a bouquet. Pen, who was staying with Aunt Russell, was my bridesmaid. She was so excited when I arrived that she kissed me so eagerly

that she knocked my hat off! I have always regretted that I gave in to my husband and did not wear a veil. He hated a fuss, so there were no flowers and for music only two marches, the one from *Lohengrin* and Mendelssohn's *Wedding March*. This, for an actor, was strange and the service was most lugubrious. Two little girls, as we left the church, strewed our paths with rose petals, which annoyed my husband.

'Yes—thank you very much—run away, children—run away!' he kept murmuring while the *Wedding March* blared out and the bells rang. I was delighted, of course.

During the service Edward left the church; he felt ill and went home. It was, however, a happy wedding breakfast. We had asked only a few real friends including, of course, my aunt and Landon Ronald and my brother and his wife.

I went away in a navy blue coat and skirt with a blue straw hat. I looked in on Edward to say goodbye, but he turned his face to the wall and would not speak. It was a dark shadow on my day.

For the time being my career came to an end. It was a bitter blow to my patrons and friends. I dare not think what the feelings of Clara Schumann must have been when she heard. Yet I had heard her tell Borwick, 'You will never make an artist until you have loved and suffered.' I was certainly to learn in a hard school. It was a long time later that the Countess Vanden Heuvel told me that Sir August Manns had declared he would never forgive me for the step I had taken in the middle of a career so auspiciously begun.

I know now how ungrateful I must have appeared to all those good people who had done so much for me. Lady Thompson had tried to warn me against the path I had chosen, but I was deaf to reason. Later, pride held me back from seeking the guidance I so desperately needed. As Carlyle says, 'Temperament is our Fate.'



A Ship that Nearly Foundered

ON 23rd August, 1896, we sailed for America in the *St Louis*. It was a new experience for me and I am not ashamed to say that, on the first night out, when the wind got up, I felt extremely nervous. After three days we were rolling a good forty degrees and although the air made me feel very fit I could not shake off my fears. Then we ran into a fog and did not slow down. Poor Tommy had kept reassuring me, but as the reason for our speed was that the Captain wished to get clear of the iceberg region I was not much comforted.

One of our passengers was Li Hung Chang, the Chinese statesman and chief minister in China. He had a large staff on board and a special chef. He used to sit in a deck-chair and stare at my feet whenever I was walking up and down the deck with Tommy. Later Li Hung told me he liked my white shoes and that, for an Englishwoman, my feet were small!

We arrived in New York during a severe heat-wave. Horses were falling down dead in the street; everything seemed to be gasping. My first impression of the city was of noise and skyscrapers which made me feel like an ant, although in '96 the Empire State and the Woolworth Building did not exist.

We went to an hotel in Fifth Avenue and as I undressed

and lay on my bed sipping iced water, the newly-invented electric fans humming, and perspiration pouring down my face, I thought I would die! After a day or two the "wave" broke. We were sitting at dinner with immense open windows all round when a terrific thunderstorm burst upon us. I was terrified but dared not show it, as no one seemed to take any notice. It passed and the air became beautifully cool. After that I began to enjoy New York and came to love the people.

Tom started his season with the glamorous actress Olga Nethersole. As I watched her on the stage it was difficult to believe that for so long she had been a children's governess. The Americans adored her. They played *Camille* and *Carmen* and all her great roles, and of course I was continually at the theatre—where it was strange for me to be spectator instead of performer. My husband kept his promise and took me frequently to Munchenheimer's for suppers of broiled lobsters and oysters, washed down by champagne! Soon after my arrival I was taken to call on William Steinway, the head and founder of the Steinway piano firm. He told me about himself and his brother who settled in Germany and produced Steinwegs there. Their pianos were used by Clara Schumann and all of us at Frankfurt and I exchanged stories of my great teacher with him. He had founded the village of Steinway in America. I found him charming, and he ended by sending the Steinway used by Paderewski to my hotel for the duration of my stay. It was a real joy and I started to play again at once. It brought me many new friends. In the late autumn and early winter I toured in Massachusetts. Some of the halls were very up-to-date, others mere shacks. Sometimes the audience would drive in from miles around. I remember arriving late one night at Lynn on the Atlantic. A blizzard was blowing and I was terribly hungry. How I blessed the negro "bell-boy" who brought us a porterhouse steak and onions and a bottle of

Finale'

champagne. The town of Lowell I remember for another attack of "nerves". Our bedroom was at the top of a very high building and I was just dozing off when my eye was attracted by a coil of rope.

'Tommy,' I muttered sleepily. 'Whatever is that rope for?'

'Fire,' Tommy grunted, also sleepily. 'You throw it out of the window and slide down it.'

Never have I been so wide awake in a few minutes. I was filled with horror at the mere thought and pictured the whole building bursting into flames at once!

I loved Boston; it was so peaceful after New York. A Steinway was put at my disposal. I gave a few concerts and built up an American public whom I long remembered. The fact that I had known Clara Schumann, Brahms and Joachim was of great interest to everyone I met.

Tommy opened a second season in New York again with Olga Nethersole. It was January and the blizzards were bad. I shivered in a gorgeous fur coat Tommy had given me, then suddenly I began to feel ill. A woman specialist was recommended and at last I went to see her.

'Unless you want your child to be born in America, I think you should go home.'

So she broke the news to me, and in a state of high excitement I went back to discuss it with Tommy.

'Would he be an actor or a musician?' The topic held our attention for a long time, but we decided that, whatever he elected to be eventually, he must be born in England. The specialist seemed anxious and I was under her constant care while I remained, for I insisted upon staying until the Frohman season was over. Frohman, I suppose, had the standing in America which Jack Hylton holds in England now.

She advised us to travel by the Atlantic Transport Company,

PROGRAMME OF

First * Recital,

Piano and Violoncello.

Wednesday Evening, March 27th, 1895.

PART I.

Sonata for Violoncello and Piano, No. 2, F major, Cello, *Andante*

Violoncello Solo
1. Rondo, *Allegretto*
2. Scherzo, *Allegretto*
3. Polka, *Allegretto*

Piano Solo
1. Minuet, *Andante*
2. Scherzo, *Allegretto*
3. Polka, *Allegretto*

PART II.

Waltz, *Andante*
1. Scherzo, *Allegretto*
2. Polka, *Allegretto*
3. Polka, *Allegretto*

Piano Solo
1. Scherzo, *Allegretto*
2. Polka, *Allegretto*
3. Polka, *Allegretto*

PROGRAMME OF

Second * Recital,

Wednesday Evening, April 3rd, 1895.

AT 8 P.M.

Entrance of Choir
Ave Maria, G major

Solo, No. 10, *Andante*

Entrance of Choir
Largo

Entrance of Choir
Poco Andante

Entrance of Choir
Poco Andante

Entrance of Choir
Poco Andante

Entrance of Choir
Poco Andante

Entrance of Choir
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Poco Andante

Entrance of Choir
Poco Andante

Entrance of Choir
Poco Andante

In 1895 I gave a series of three pianoforte recitals at the Steinway Hall.

Steinway & Sons Orchestral Grand Piano will be used at these Recitals.

and explained that as no cargo was carried, but only cattle and horses, the ships had "rolling chocks" which prevented rolling and pitching to a certain extent. Willingly I agreed.

I had made many friends in America and was sorry to leave, but I was able to see an American New Year in before I set sail. I was sitting with Tommy in our cosy room eating walnuts and sipping hot rum which Tommy had prepared for me. When midnight struck pandemonium broke loose. I had never heard such a din. The sirens of all the ships in New York harbour blared, church bells rang, people—thousands of them—shouted 'A Happy New Year'. I stitched happily away at the robe I was making and Tom and I kissed each other and wished the baby luck. I thought the baby would be a girl as I longed for one, and she was to be called Elaine Mary. We listened, that New Year of 1897, to the joyous din of New York and talked of and drank to little Elaine Mary.

We sailed in the S.S. *Manitoba*. She carried only twelve passengers and about five hundred horses and cattle below. The weather was perfect at first. Then, off Nova Scotia, we noticed that the ocean looked like oil; everything was very still—the sun was setting in a blaze of red. We could hear the water lapping the sides of the ship as if we were on a river. There was a great silence over everything and the officers looked serious.

'Look ahead!' somebody called. Orders were shouted as, looking ahead, we saw an ominous and terrifying line of surf. The sea was still horribly "oily", the sky clear except above the white line where a dark cloud was growing. The sun began to go down, the glass was falling and falling.

As the storm broke the ship began to pitch. We were in for one of the worst cyclones known for years in mid-Atlantic. We were a small ship laden with hundreds of cattle, a few passengers, and one expectant mother. We rolled and pitched—

the engines raced, the ship strained, we began to take big seas overboard. I lay in my bunk, tossed from side to side, shutting my ears to each thundering crash of the sea. It went on all night and the next day. The second night Tommy was standing by my berth doing what he could for me when a big sea came aboard and the water poured through the ceiling. His face went white. I clutched his hand, trembling. Although he reassured me then, he told me afterwards that he really did think it was hopeless, for the ship seemed to go right under. There were terrible noises below, horses' legs were being broken, men shouted and slithered about on the deck, and the wind roared. I had to leave the cabin for it was awash. They laid me on cushions in the little saloon, the captain visited me, the doctor injected me with morphia, giving me sips of champagne, but nothing stopped my terror. The stewardess said her rosary over me. Even the stokers, while they drank their coffee, came to try and cheer me.

Then after the third night one of the women passengers brought good news.

'The sky is clearing! We have seen a star and the storm is dying down!'

From that moment things seemed better. The seas sounded less tremendous—the ship strained less. Members of the crew kept popping in, exhausted but triumphant.

'It's clearing—'

'Soon see the sun!'

'You'll be on deck in a jiff.'

Each man had some word to cheer me for they knew that the doctor was concerned about me.

We reached London docks, several days overdue, in mid-March. The *Manitoba* was stove in forward, had lost all life-boats, some four hundred cattle and part of the bridge had gone. We were lucky to have survived at all, for another ship was also

expected but her fires had gone out and she had foundered. As for Captain Griffiths, to whom we owed so much, I could shed tears even now. The *Manitoba* was finished after that voyage and he was given the S.S. *Mohegan* for his next trip across the Atlantic. On her return from New York in a dense fog she went down with all hands off the Needles.

The Howells met us at the docks and we went to stay with them at St George's Square. Edward seemed more cheerful and was very kind. Everyone fussed over me and I began to enjoy life again. Tommy and the doctor never left me and my baby was born, six weeks too early, on 10th May. I was very dangerously ill and the baby, a boy, was a fragile little thing whom we scarcely expected to live. He was christened Thomas, Alan Kingston.

When I was stronger we bought a house in a road leading out of Haverstock Hill; then began all the interest of converting it to our requirements. Tom spent a great deal of money on it, especially on the music-room for me. Comfortable seating was built all round the room, which I had decorated in white. We had a good staff and I began my first lessons in housekeeping and entertaining—and preferred entertaining!

My nurse was excellent and remained with me for many years. The baby was delicate and cried a lot at night, but Nurse seemed to thrive on work—and a daily Guinness—and lavished care on the child. She had a glass eye, and as the years went on and a second little boy was put in her charge, I used often to be told the story of how she placed the eye on the mantelpiece every night! The children considered it a sort of decoration.

It was at this time, at the intense desire of my husband and in gratitude for his goodness to me, I consented to be received into the Roman Catholic Church. I was received by an elderly Jesuit priest at the Haverstock Hill Priory and at the same time we went

Finale

through the marriage service again as our original one in the Church of England was not recognized by the Roman Church. Apparently I had been "living in sin", although never had I felt so good or so much married!

Oddly enough I received a letter from my enemy of the bouquet, Charles Santley:

Dear Miss de Lara,

I heartily congratulate you on your reception into the Church. You will find many crosses to bear, but you have a haven where you are sure to find peace.

Yours sincerely,

C. SANTLEY

He had a kind heart, after all, and I suppose most artists have their idiosyncrasies.

As I became stronger I began to accept concert engagements which came crowding in from Leeds, Birmingham and Liverpool.

It was good to be back on the British concert platform, even if it did entail many long journeys in very cold trains. Travellers could hire tin hot-water warming-pans for the feet. They were one's only comfort. There were no restaurant cars, so if my journey was overlong I would pack a hamper and a small spirit-stove so that I could make myself a hot drink. Dressing-rooms at some of the concert halls were freezing, as too many of them still are. Few had coal fires, but at least they were not in the sorry state of dilapidation so many of them are today. In between tours Tommy and I snatched a second honeymoon at Deal, this time without the best man and sisters-in-law. I had become much fonder of him. He was so charming, and even-tempered, and I respected him enormously. In the autumn and right through the winter I played all over England, I think with added depth, for

life was good and I was happy. My second child was soon to be born and my last engagement was in April at Birmingham with the Schiever Quintette. Blanche Marchesi was the vocalist. I played the Brahms Piano Quintet and several big solos. The concert took place in the evening and I wore a lovely long and very full frock of black accordion pleated chiffon. Blanche Marchesi, when she bade me goodbye, shook me warmly by the hand as she left the artists' room.

'Give my love to the twins!' she said. I hoped very much she was not right!

On 20th May, 1898, William Ewart Gladstone died and three hours later my son was born. The doctor said I must christen him William after Gladstone but I did not want to, and while the baby howled himself hoarse we argued. Finally I agreed to Ewart and as Tommy was playing with Olga Nethersole in a play called *Denise* we finally fixed upon "Denis Ewart", who was destined to become an M.P. at the age of twenty-one. Again I had longed for a girl and Denis really should have been one, for he was always smiling and very lovely. He had wonderful golden eyes, thick lashes and a mop of golden-brown curls. People would stop Nurse in the street to admire him and he became a much photographed child. Alan also had improved out of all knowledge and had grey eyes and thick golden curls. I was very proud of my handsome family.

I gave many parties that year and in my music-room there was much lovely music, and theatrical and concert artists would mingle happily. Often the Kruse Quartet would come and delight us all with their playing; sometimes Tommy and Lewis Waller would recite. Refreshments would be served from a side table; then I would give some solos and Olga Nethersole would entertain us with a sketch. Everyone who came was expected to contribute something. There was no wireless, no television; we made our own

Finale

entertainment and enjoyed every minute. There were so many musical parties in those days. Once when I had been away touring the Midlands with Alwina Valeria, Angela Vanbrugh, a sister of Irene, had been our chief violinist. I had liked her so much and she was so attractive that I arranged for my friends to meet her and took a great deal of trouble over the preparations. Unfortunately at the last minute she could not come, but Irene Vanbrugh wrote me a letter that softened the blow.

At another party I came across George Grossmith and before long he sat down at the piano and began to entertain us with some of his own compositions. We all suffered from the blaring and untuneful German bands which played in our streets. In desperation we would throw them pennies to go away! George Grossmith's popular song *The Germans are a Noble Race* of course referred to this. There never was anyone like him, and once we had got him started, we would never let him stop. Hope Temple was another composer I met in this way. Her ballads were being much sung; also Lawrence Kellie. I had met Oscar Wilde previously and was struck by his charm and his cultured manner, but his appearance did not appeal to me. The last time I saw him, not long before his trial, was when I caught sight of him in the front row at the Steinway Hall at one of my concerts. I was shocked to see how fat and coarse he had become.

One day I went to tea with the Lady Mayoress, Kathleen Green, at the Mansion House, London, and there I was asked to play to a Mr and Mrs Dana Gibson. She was the original "Gibson Girl". I played, among other things, the Rachmaninoff *Prelude in C Sharp Minor* which I had brought out. I was continually asked to play it and did, year in year out. All through the United Kingdom, America, Australia, on board ship, in Egypt, in the Western goldfields, on a gimcrack piano in France, on the

A Ship That Nearly Foundered

finest Steinway Grand. I always used the third pedal for the sustaining note. I used also to love playing the *Liebestod* from *Tristan and Isolde*, arranged by myself, but when one day I met Wagner's son Siegfried I had not the courage to play it! It was for him, as a baby, that Wagner had composed *Siegfried's Idyll*. I felt great pleasure in knowing his son, for I have always been a great admirer of Wagner's music.

Looking back I realize that life was very good to me just then. In spite of the fact that I had broken off my career to get married and left England for some time, the public had not forgotten me. Engagements continued to flow in, I had plenty of money to spend. I was dancing on my way—feeling very happy and more in love with Tommy than I had ever been. But it was near the end of a chapter.



The Unfortunate Parting!

I HAD just returned from a very successful concert at the Bechstein Hall—I had so many bouquets I could not get them all into the brougham. Tommy had said he was going out to supper after his performance, and I had amused myself arranging my flowers and was brushing my hair when he returned. He kissed me rather absent-mindedly, then instead of going to undress hovered around the room.

‘Is anything the matter?’ I asked, expecting to hear he had fluffed his lines, or the curtain had come down at the wrong moment.

‘No!’ but his voice sounded over-hearty. ‘How was it?’ he added.

‘How was what?’

‘The concert, of course.’

‘Oh, wonderful!’

With relief I began to tell him all about it, but soon realized he was not even listening.

‘I think you had better tell me what is worrying you,’ I said in the same voice. It was a moment before he realised what I had said.

‘It is nothing to worry about, in fact it is rather good. I’ve just

had a wonderful offer to go to Australia again.'

'But, Tommy, that is wonderful!'

I was immensely relieved; but then the bomb fell.

'Yes; but you see, Adelina, I cannot take you.'

I looked at him stupidly. Such a thought had never crossed my mind. It seemed unthinkable that he should even consider leaving me behind. We had become such perfect friends. I relied on him for everything. I could not bear the idea of being alone once again. I had had too much of it in my youth. I said everything I possibly could. I cried, I pleaded with him, I begged—but he was firm. I could follow in a few months' time, was all he would say.

Tommy asked a cousin of his, the sister of our best man, to come and stay with me, but I would not be comforted. I cried so much I became ill the day before he left. He kissed me goodbye when the time came and then, as I heard the front door bang, I screamed and screamed. Never in my life had I been such a fool. It was foolish on his part; I had come to love him, but I never felt the same about him after that. For days I was ill. I tried to cure myself but I could not eat anything; always I saw in my imagination his ship going further and further away.

I went to Eastbourne, and the change did me good. I returned to London, made myself sit at the piano and sing. A strange feeling came over me, I felt dreadfully ill. That night my temperature was 104°—the doctor was sent for. He seemed to think it was typhoid fever and kept me alive on milk. A fortnight later he wired for Sir Frederick Treves. He could not come but sent Raymond Johnson of Wimpole Street. He arrived with a nurse, and operated then and there, having brought the kitchen table up to the bedroom; I had appendicitis and internal abscesses, but for some reason he did not remove the appendix. During the next fortnight I became worse; he operated again and this time thoroughly! No one expected me to live; they did not know that all the time I

Finale

was obsessed with the idea of sailing to Australia. I think it was that which kept me alive. I lay in one position for weeks and weeks. When at last I was allowed to get up I had lost a great deal of weight and one leg was shorter than the other. I had to learn to walk all over again. Tommy was informed that my illness was officially peritonitis. I was forbidden to go to Australia, but when at last I made them understand that only the desire to go had kept me alive, they gave in.

It was hard to say goodbye to the children, but I was still wanting desperately to be with Tommy, so there was nothing else for it. I sailed in the S.S. *Austral* at the end of October. She was a far bigger ship than the *Manitoba* and my cabin was large and pleasant, but not to be compared with present-day comfort. Portholes varied on different ships, sometimes being small and round or large, with Nelson-type windows, which I preferred. A strip of carpet would add luxury to bare boards, and the bunk-beds were at floor level, ornate with heavy brass knobs. The furniture consisted of an all-in-one huge dressing-table wash-stand, complete with wash-basin and jug, and with a large wardrobe, for our dresses and hats needed space in those days!

My wounds still had to be dressed and I was hobbling about with a stick. I was put in charge of the ship's doctor and a Mr Holmes, who was a friend of our best man. Mr Holmes soon imagined that he was in love with me, but he tried hard to hide it, without, however, much success. I was sorry for him but not interested.

On the third day out I was trying to tie my shoelace when someone rushed forward to help me. Kneeling down, he looked up into my face as soon as the lace was tied and I saw two marvellous blue eyes. The inevitable happened—I fell madly in love with this Irish Chief Officer. He could not have come into my

life at a more unfortunate time. Secretly I was smarting with the idea that my husband had treated me cruelly. I had been dangerously ill through him. Now my health was returning, the ship was rushing through the Bay of Biscay, the weather was glorious and life was full of possibilities. Everything conspired to make me throw discretion to the winds. In vain did poor Mr Holmes try to reason with me, but I would not listen to him. Tim and I were like a couple of children and did not wish to see reason—we lived only for the moment. I was still too weak to work; the doctors had said it would be months before I could. They also said I would never be able to walk any distance again. That proved a fallacy, for since then I have walked as much as fifteen miles in a day, and I even took up tennis.

Unfortunately the affair with Tim developed into something far more serious than I intended, and before Mr Holmes left the ship Tim was asking me to run away with him. He even offered to give up the Service and wait while I got a divorce. It was then I knew that, however much I might think of leaving my husband, never, in any circumstances, could I leave my children. Tim of course was very upset, and we were both miserable. But I knew I could not really hurt Tommy when it came to the point, and there was also my music. Our parting was heart-rending. I dreaded the sight of Melbourne Harbour.

Tommy came to the ship to meet me. He guessed at once that something was amiss, and soon realized how it was with Tim and me. That night at Pharlets Hotel, Sydney, I told him about it all and cried and cried on his shoulder. He was so kind and said that he would always be there, to welcome me back if I went with Tim and we tired of each other. Such understanding made me pull myself together. I made up my mind to try to forget Tim and succeeded fairly well.

I did not like the hotel and we soon moved to a boarding-house

Finale

on Sydney Harbour. Reputed to be the most beautiful in the world, I found the foliage monotonous with its everlasting gum and fig trees broken only by the lovely mimosa or wattle bloom. The insect life was marvellous, and I saw flying cockroaches, dragonflies and butterflies of brilliant colours. I soon discovered that nature was not always kind "down under". The first week there was a plague of locusts, and the curtains became brown with them. In the gardens were dangerous snakes, and on my first day in Australia there was a tragedy—for a boy had been eaten by a shark in the sea near the end of our garden. I tired of the incessant north-east winds varied by a "southerly buster" and the town became thick with the smoke of Bush fires. The flying foxes or vampire bats were loathsome; they came out in the moonlight and flew round and round; I hated them.

At Christmas we went to Melbourne, where Tommy was now a popular stage star. The women were all crazy over him and I was referred to in the papers as "his adoring wife". His leading lady was Nance O'Neill and they played *Camille*, *Magda*, *Hedda Gabler*, *Queen Elizabeth* and such plays. We stayed in the Menzies Hotel and I was glad to be away from Sydney, for plague had broken out. They had it there every year. That year it broke out in January and by May there had been 193 cases. There were 163 deaths. Rats were considered the cause and as many as 5,000 a day were destroyed, sixpence being paid for each rat caught. Inoculation with Haffking's serum was advised, and accepted by many people, but Tom and I refused it.

I intended to sail for England on 7th June, but it was no good; I missed Tom so much that I turned round at Adelaide and took the train back, complete with piles of luggage and five talkative parrots which I had bought in Melbourne.

We remained in Melbourne for some months, then went back to Sydney and to our many old friends. We had a wonderful

time and attended all the functions in Government House. War had been declared between England and the Transvaal on 11th October, 1899, a few days before I had sailed for Australia, and we were in Sydney the night Mafeking was relieved. Tommy was in the theatre playing in *Oliver Twist*. The play was stopped and the news confirmed from the stage. We all went mad. Strangers kissed each other. Tommy had a wreath tied with red, white and blue ribbon thrown to him. The band played *Rule, Britannia* and *God Save the Queen*. I was glad and proud to be there, to know that I was British, and that my brother George had taken part in the victory we were all celebrating.



Roses, Roses all the Way

IN THE following December I finally went home to see the children. Under his contract Tom had to remain in Australia and I made up my mind to return to him as soon as possible.

I found the children well and happy, grown out of all recognition, and I settled down to make the most of my time with them. I practised a great deal, determined to give concerts on my return to Melbourne, and I found time to accept some engagements in London. I played again at the Crystal Palace and at the Steinway Hall.

May 10th found me once again aboard the *Austral*, still with the same old list to starboard, and still on her last voyage!

Just before we reached Naples I was laid low with fever; there had been four other cases on board. The ship's doctor insisted that I should land and remain in Naples, as two of the patients had died and he was becoming nervous. It was not a pleasant experience—I had a high temperature and did not understand the Customs Officer who raged because I did not produce my passport. Eventually I was allowed to go to the Hotel de Londres and collapsed on my bed; in the middle of the night the staff had to fetch the doctor. Soon I was being nursed and cared for with all the kindness in the world and within two

days I recovered. I wired my sister-in-law in London, who contacted a friend of hers living in Naples. He was an Englishman and speedily came to my rescue.

Soon I was well enough to see the sights of the town. My friend showed me Naples and Pompeii. We drove to the Castellamare, and I saw Herculaneum with its glimpses of houses peeping out from under the lava. Some of the mosaics were very beautiful.

I made an entry in my diary about the beauty of all I saw: 'Naples,' I also noted, 'was spoilt by the people, they were so rude.' It was impossible to walk about alone, apart from the danger of being robbed. I had not been in Naples long before the usual complications arose! One day I dropped my handkerchief as I rose from lunch, at which a handsome young naval officer rushed forward to retrieve it. Of course we got into conversation—his English was halting, so was my Italian. He insisted upon introducing me to his aunt, the Contessa. It appeared he was in command of the warship *Barbarossa*. He began to bombard me with flowers and wanted to escort me everywhere. This did not suit my English friend, who also sent flowers. It seemed to be the story of Mr Holmes and Tim all over again. After a week the Commander solemnly proposed to me. I was sorry but reminded him I was a married woman with two boys. He refused to take this seriously, referring me to his aunt, his family and financial position!

Day after day he would fetch me and we would have tea on his ship. We would go out to it in her boat and I liked the men raising their oars in salute as we embarked or disembarked.

'You can divorce your husband—marry me—the Marquis!' He became very impatient and impetuous when I would not take him seriously.

Fortunately the time was near for me to sail—I longed for it, although I was fascinated by my handsome escort. The Commander arranged to take me out to my ship, the R.M.S. *Cuzco*.

Finale

It was a hot afternoon. I wore a white dress and a picture hat and sat in the boat among the smart Italian sailors and with the still smarter Commander in full uniform. As we approached the *Cuzco* I could see some of the ship's officers in their white uniforms sitting on deck and watching our approach through glasses. There was again all the pomp of our embarking, oars in the air, salutes. The officers all stood up as we came aboard, and I became aware at once of a pair of very blue eyes looking straight into mine. Tim! He saluted very stiffly and glared at the Commander. I felt very small and rather ashamed of myself, although I could not have prevented this ridiculous situation.

The Captain came forward and I made the necessary introductions, then I parted with the Commander.

I found my cabin a mass of flowers, and flowers again at my table—the last, I thought, of the Commander. But no—as the ship got under way I was startled. ‘Boom! Boom!’ Guns were being fired across the Bay. ‘Boom!’ again. Everyone started to ask questions. ‘It’s *Barbarossa* saying goodbye,’ the Captain explained dryly.

At Melbourne Tom met me, and soon we were back in Sydney and I settled down to work. I organized some recitals and concerts and the first was in the Century Hall with a violinist and ‘cellist. We played trios, which were very popular. I had a vocalist, Jessie King, to assist me and we received a great ovation and many flowers. My agents, Paling of Sydney, then arranged for a recital in Sydney Town Hall and announced it with great publicity.

‘Adelina de Lara, the great pianist who created such a furore on Monday last . . .’ and in the *Sydney Telegraph*: ‘It is not often that an opportunity is presented of hearing a pianist of Adelina de Lara’s rank; accordingly a right hearty welcome was given to this distinguished artist at the Century Hall last night. No doubt



Tommy Kingston and I were married in 1896. *Left:* as he appeared in a long-forgotten play *Dorothy Vernon*, and *below* with Lily Langtry. Lily Langtry is in the centre of this photograph, and my husband on the extreme right.





HOTEL CECIL,

STRAND, W.C.

W. S. 321 75 M

July 6th 07

Dear Madam,

My Maestro has
already played to me your
nice things, but I should
much like if you care
to come & play yourself
for me. Any time in
the afternoon between 5 & 6 pm.
when I am not singing I
shall be pleased to see you.

Yours faithfully
Enrico Caruso

Caruso offered to sing my *Rose of the World* if I would have the words translated into Italian. See page 142.

when this pianist has gone we shall realize what we have been entertaining amongst us unaware.'

A fashion paper excelled itself with:

'Adelina de Lara was at the race meeting with her handsome husband. In the daytime she has untidy hair and a dark complexion—but at night she looks radiant in a white lace dress and red roses in her hair.'

At my second recital in the Town Hall I was presented with an unusual bouquet—my first name, about six feet high, made in red roses. Six men brought it on to the stage and it carried a card, "From the ladies of Sydney." I often wonder how many of them must have subscribed to it. About ten bouquets followed and baskets of flowers. It really was a case of "Roses, roses all the way" and I felt very spoiled.

At this stage Tommy showed the first signs of jealousy. As he pointed out, it was one thing for me to be spoken of as "Tommy Kingston's wife," but he objected very much to becoming "Adelina de Lara's husband"! He even suggested I went back to England and played there, but I had other plans and suggested Melbourne instead! So along we went together and I played and he acted. We visited some lovely places, including Bondi on the Pacific, and as the concerts were successful I felt on top of the world. We travelled in the Bush and when Tom announced he was going to the goldfields and that I could come with him I felt he was getting used to my playing.

We stayed ten weeks in the goldfields and my memory of them all those years ago is vivid. Coolgardie was ruined. Its desolation was terrible. There was only one street and everything seemed dead. There were a few hotels, a few shops and some dreadful little shacks covered with mere strips of canvas. No water had been laid on and every drop we used had to be brought a

Finale

two days' journey. We were charged two shillings a bucket for it. How I missed my bath! How little did I realize that later I would marvel that such a personality as Eileen Joyce had spent so much of her childhood in such surroundings.

The miners used to buy a small piece of ground and make themselves a tent, where the entire family would live. The menfolk would fill a tin pan with sand, and blow and blow to see if there was any gold left. Perhaps after a long time they would find a speck; sometimes they panned for days and found nothing.

The theatre in Coolgardie was only a little hut, but the audience made up for all the inconveniences and the lack of a really good piano. The miners were musical; they crowded in to hear me play, many of them hearing for the first time works of Schumann and Brahms which I loved to play to them. The concert over, they would continue to applaud, refusing to go home. It was the same wherever I went in the goldfields; men hungry for music, the women relaxing as I played, happy to forget the starkness of their lives. I used to wear my prettiest frocks for them, for I know it added to their pleasure. We stayed at the Victoria Hotel and Tom bought me a brooch with three gold nuggets on it, which was stolen a year later in London. Kalgoorlie was a great improvement on Coolgardie, but still there was no water. We remained there three weeks and our skin seemed impregnated with sand, our clothes full of it. Our hotel, little better than a wooden shack, was good but I found the place depressing.

One man gave me a little bottle full of uncut rubies and garnets because I reminded him of his sister. I had wonderful opals, too, given to me in New South Wales and Victoria. One was enormous, the gift of a millionaire, but I gave them away in London for I was superstitious. I also had some Queensland opals which threw out a red light.

Tom's company, under the direction of J. C. Williamson,

was sent to South Africa where the Boer War was still in progress. Nance O'Neill, who was playing with Tommy, had given me a kitten which we called Lady Teazle and took on our voyage. We left Fremantle in the S.S. *Nineveh*. The ship's doctor discovered Lady Teazle was a boy and we rechristened him Teazleade. The second week out we struck a severe gale which kept us off Natal for a week. But this time I enjoyed it and played the piano to pass the time away. We were cut off from events, and unaware that there had been a fierce attack by Botha on the Zulu border, "gallantly upheld" with heavy losses. Also there were attempts by Botha and de Wet to invade Natal which were frustrated. The public prosecutor of Johannesburg was convicted of high treason and shot in the city. The white flag and the Red Cross were in those days respected, and prisoners were humanely treated.

Cape Town itself was still quaint and primitive; there were only one or two buildings including the Post Office and Government House. The food, for wartime, was good, but we could hear the guns in the distance and on the night of our arrival General McKinley was killed.

Tom was engaged to play in many places, chiefly to entertain the troops behind the lines. I used to climb with him on Table Mountain and sit among the blaze of wild flowers, gazing across the miles of blue ocean, with the African sun pouring down upon us. I knew I was going to love Africa, but had hardly time to settle down, for news came from her husband, Colonel Theobald, that Pen was seriously ill. She had married three years before and he now cabled me to return at once. Tom agreed that I must go, and with a heavy heart I decided to leave in the *Nineveh*, now due to sail home. It was hard to go. The town was gay with officers and nurses on leave and the hotel was full. I had planned to do some playing; but I was anxious about my sister and once again I parted from Tom and set out for England.



An Unpleasant and A Pleasant Experience

ALTHOUGH I was worried, the journey home was very pleasant. I made so many friends among the officers on board. We ran into very heavy seas and everything broke away in my cabin, including the wash-basin. Eventually we steamed slowly into Tilbury and I landed armed with a large bag of shrimps from one of the officers, my parrots and Teazleade!

I found Pen, as I feared, very ill and in great pain and beyond an operation. It seemed so tragic, for she was only thirty-six. For her sake we could only hope that the end was near. The Colonel was elderly and devoted to her. I could do nothing with him or for him. I stayed near Pen continually until she died—the end came peacefully. She had done so much for me when I was young. I owed her more than I can say.

Afterwards I took the children down to Brighton and then found rooms in Gower Street for ourselves and the governess. I sold the house in Haverstock Hill, for I was rejoining Tom in Egypt and wished to settle everything up. I did not play in public, but received my old friends in the evenings and gave them private recitals, for of course I was lent a piano at once by Steinway.

I sailed for Egypt in March 1902 in the R.M.S. *Oruba* of the Orient Line. There was on board a passenger named Roderick

Vargis connected with the Orient Line, whom I quickly disliked. He seemed to think I needed protection and took it upon himself to look after me. He said he knew my husband and informed me that Tom was sending a reliable Arab to meet me at Port Said, with money. He said he would see me into the train for Cairo and that he had given the Orient Line people their instructions. We put in at Port Said, but there was no Arab as Mr Vargis had promised. This put me in an awkward position as I had spent all my cash on board and had only five shillings left! However, Mr Vargis conferred with the Captain and they decided I had better go ashore and spend the night while they wired Tom. There seemed nothing else for it. Port Said, I knew, was a dangerous place and here was I almost penniless, escorted by a man in whom I had no confidence. He led me down dirty little back streets, finally stopping at a queer, wretched-looking house. He hustled me in as I hesitated and an unsavoury man appeared, who seemed to know Mr Vargis. They conferred together and then I was taken to my room. It led by French windows to a wide verandah. I asked for the chambermaid and was told there were no female servants!

Mr Vargis and I dined together. I had no appetite for I was beginning to feel nervous. There were only a few people in the sordid looking dining-room—all men. I became more and more suspicious. I tried to look calm, but after dinner when I bade Mr Vargis goodnight, he admitted that the whole thing was a ruse to get me ashore, adding that Tom had really arranged for the Arab to meet the ship at Ismailia further down the Canal. I was too angry to be frightened, and told him exactly what I thought of him. It was useless. He began to make love to me, thinking himself irresistible.

I retreated to my room in terror. I locked the door and secured the verandah windows and made a barricade of chairs. I knew

Finale

that I could expect no help from anyone. I had only my dressing-case with me. Suddenly I remembered a dagger which I always carried with me. It was a Spanish knife, used by toradors at bullfights. Feverishly I searched for it, found it and unwrapped it. I made up my mind to remain fully dressed. I even kept on my hat, a large white picture one! Then I sat on a chair, the knife in my hand and waited. There was a knock at the door.

A brief argument and then I heard him go away. I relaxed. Another half-hour passed, then I heard the French windows rattle. I had no peace from then on—he went from door to window trying to force them open. All the time I kept talking, I warned him of the dagger. I said I would kill myself or him if he broke in. I pleaded, threatened, scolded, implored, but still he did not go away. At last I started to sob and to my annoyance could not stop myself. And then I realized he had gone—this time for good. It was by then about four in the morning. Somehow I managed to keep awake, still holding my dagger, for the rest of the night, until he finally returned, knocked and said breakfast was ready and that my train left at nine-thirty.

This time I did open the door but still with the dagger in my hand.

His manner was entirely different. I imagine he was pretty scared. I must have looked awful and was feeling ill. I asked for some cognac and he rushed off to get it.

He put me on the train for Ismailia, although I never spoke another word to him.

‘I will write and apologise to your husband.’

Still I did not answer. The train started and I never saw him again.

Never was I happier than when the train arrived at Ismailia and a great big grinning Arab came up and saluted me.

‘Madame Kingston?’

An Unpleasant and A Pleasant Experience

He saw to my luggage and took me to my hotel; and never in all my life have I been so pleased to see so many women as when I went for lunch to the hotel dining-room!

Tom met me in Cairo and we drove to Shepheard's. What a joy it was after the night before! The first thing I did was to have a bath in the palatial bathroom. I felt I was cleansing myself of Mr Vargis and the odours of Port Said. When I told the story to Tom he was furious. He wanted to go the next day to thrash Mr Vargis. I persuaded him not to. He insisted, however, upon writing to the company and demanding his dismissal.

I loved Cairo. I rode in one of the first motor cars ever seen there, which belonged to the Khedive. A member of his household who was staying at Shepheard's, and a correspondent of the London *Daily Telegraph*, who was nicknamed "Baby", became very friendly with us. The car was a source of astonishment to the Arabs and terror to the camels. We drove in it through the congested streets at about five miles an hour, an awkward, heavy, smoking, puffing, noisy piece of machinery.

One day we visited the Gesirch Palace Hotel across the Nile. It had been a palace of a former Khedive and much had remained unchanged. The mantelpieces alone cost four thousand pounds each, made of jade and lapis lazuli. The floors were of marble. Tom and I played table-tennis in a great marble hall, and wasted endless energy chasing ping-pong balls on the marble floor.

I became ill in Cairo through drinking unsterilized water. There were many drawbacks to the Middle East in 1900; the flies were a constant pest. I was struck by the cruelty, perhaps through ignorance, to animals, and the donkeys especially suffered. Not long after my visit to Egypt and Italy the R.S.P.C.A. took a hand and, I know, did fine work. One saw so many diseases and I disliked the crowds of screaming Arabs perpetually clamouring around one for money.

Finale

Tom was acting at the Cairo Opera House. It was a very beautiful building. There were three-tier boxes for the ladies of the royal harem, discreetly curtained with black net. All we could see was the flash of diamonds and the movement of shadowy forms. The plays were in English and consisted of famous dramas such as *Magda*, *Camille* and *Frou-Frou*. I often wonder what the ladies behind the net curtains thought of us. I sat in the largest box by the stage, and I used to wear a lovely cape of pale blue feathers, a wedding present, and always carried a huge white ostrich fan in hot countries. I had received about ten of these as wedding presents, for no fashionable lady was without one then. Wherever I went everyone knew I was the popular actor's wife and a musician myself, so I was never lonely.

Before leaving Egypt we visited Tel-el-Kebir in Lower Egypt, eighty miles from Ismailia. It was there that Sir Garnet Wolscley defeated Arabi Pasha in 1882. I took away a large red stone from the graves of our men, to keep as a relic of the Sudan War which caused so much anxiety when I was a child of ten.

I was sorry to leave Egypt. When we arrived at the station and entered our reserved saloon on the train, we found it full of flowers, sent by the management of Shepheard's. It was a lovely gesture, and as the train slowly moved out of Cairo station my eyes were full of tears. I have often wondered why I became so fond of Egypt, and still think of it with longing and regret.



Strange Influence

WE reached London on 3rd May, 1902. I was happy to be back, although we had no home to return to, but we soon found a flat in Westminster Palace Gardens and my mind turned to my concert engagements. I was eager to begin, I had been away too long, and now there was nothing to prevent me giving my mind seriously to my work. Tom had no objection; indeed, he was all encouragement and happy to see I was facing life with an added keenness. Yet it was Tom who unwittingly brought to our lives a disturbing change, and introduced me to a man who had greater influence on my life than any other.

It was the time of the Coronation of King Edward VII. We had a wonderful view of it from our windows as the procession moved along Victoria Street. The roar of the crowds, the sound of the military bands awoke in me an exalted excitement. It was a very special coronation for me, for I had played to the royal couple when I was a little girl. I felt uplifted and happy long after it was over.

Tom, who had been out, no doubt to make merry at one of his clubs, brought home with him a companion.

'I've found someone I've always wanted you to know, Adelina. Toby, this is my wife.'

Finale

Tom stood aside and I got my first clear view of this lost friend whom he seemed so glad to have met. Some instinct made me recoil and, as his lips brushed my hand, I was aware of a pair of slightly mocking and unhappy eyes in a handsome face.

His voice was attractive, soft with a husky drawl and well modulated. I instinctively withdrew my hand rather sharply, and regretted it at once. I could not have done worse. His eyes hardened and he turned away. For the rest of the evening there was an armed neutrality between us.

Apparently Tom noticed it, for he was puzzled by my behaviour.

‘Why so unfriendly?’ he asked.

‘I hardly know him. I was tired—the day has been exciting.’

But I knew I did not sound convincing, and finally under pressure I explained, or tried to, that there was something about Toby that repelled me. Tom was angry. He hinted at some tragedy in Toby’s life, which of course aroused my curiosity, but he refused to explain, and so perverse are women that he awakened an interest which might have otherwise lain dormant. I wanted to find out what the tragedy was.

Wherever we went, Toby came too, and his moods were unpredictable. He seemed to have a split personality. He could talk well on most subjects, was devoted to music, but suddenly I would come up against a brick wall and a hard, bitter look came into his eyes. Nor could I overcome my first repulsion. He was intensely domesticated, criticized the way I ran house and children, and was supported in this by Tom.

We found a larger house, in Maida Vale, and then, to my amazement, Tom suddenly announced that Toby would live with us. It was useless to protest; Toby came.

It was a help, financially, as Tom had recently lost a good deal of money: and logic was on his side. Toby took over more and

more of the domestic cares, and I could be free for my music. He was a martinet, kept me to a stern discipline, and my house was no longer my own. But my instinct had been right; our relationship was uneasy and his moods varied from kindness to harshness.

All this time I was composing songs and song-cycles and was accepting•thankfully more and more provincial engagements. I had come to look upon them as a means of escape!

I went to Yorkshire to play at John Dunn's concerts. He was a good violinist and we gave the first performance of Richard Strauss' violin sonata at the old St James' Hall in London. I also played at Edgar Haddock concerts at Leeds Town Hall. On my return from one of my escapes some good news awaited me. At least I thought it was. Lewis Waller, that charming, lovable actor, had come to Tom's rescue. He offered him a fabulous salary in the play called *Monsieur Beaucaire* at the Lyric. It ran for•a long time and put us on our feet again.

'Now we need no longer share our home,' I pointed out to Tom.

'And how ungracious we would look, the moment everything is well with us. Besides, I think it is to everyone's advantage to have Toby here; he keeps us all up to scratch.'

'I do not want to be kept up to scratch. I want to be free to run my own home as I wish,' I argued.

'It gives you more freedom.'

'If you mean I go away more, it is only because I can call my soul my own when I do go away—please, Tom, listen to me.'

I lost my temper; I stormed and begged, even ended in tears; but everything had been arranged. Toby's invalid sister was to come and join us in Tom's absence; the place would be even less mine than it already was.

'Well, when you come back?' I made my last plea, but Tom only promised to think it over and I had to leave it at that. Then,

Finale

just before Tom left on tour, an unfortunate thing happened. He had a cousin, Rose, who had an acquaintance given to speculating. He was always on the look-out for somebody's money to play with, and soon discovered that Toby had three thousand pounds, which was quite a lot in those days. Toby asked Tom's advice, and little thinking that Toby would invest all his money, Tom advised a flutter and never gave it another thought. Some weeks later a telegram arrived. Rose's friend had been involved in a financial crash, involving fifty thousand pounds! Poor Toby, he became quite demented, working himself finally into a breakdown. Tom felt responsible and, to make matters worse, he swore our home would always be Toby's. As Toby recovered, his changes of mood became more erratic. I became terribly dispirited and could not give my mind to my music. One by one my patrons had died. Sir Henry and Lady Thompson, the Johnstones, Mr and Mrs Priestley. They left a gap in my life I could not fill.

It was at this juncture that Tom was offered the lead, opposite Lily Langtry, to play in Africa and the Colonies. It was a wonderful chance and would straighten all our finances.

'When do we start?'

My mind was already busy with plans and, apart from leaving the children, I was overjoyed at the prospect of escaping from our Maida Vale régime.

'We?' Tom looked at me blankly for a moment. Then he explained that he was going alone.

He showed a firmness of which I had never dreamed him capable. In my heart I knew he was right. As he said, my place was with the children, and to keep our home together. But that was denied me, for when the time came for his departure he put Toby in charge of everything.

As I became more and more depressed. Tom realised he could not take it too lightly. He asked if I would like to have the boys nearer. Of course I jumped at the idea, and arrangements were made for them to leave Worthing and go to school at Highgate. This, and the fact that I was to have Emma, who had been nurse to the Joachim family, to "do" for me, cheered me a little. Later, I managed to arrange for a pension for her.

Toby became kindness itself, although I quickly discovered that he intended to rule my life. He expected to be consulted in everything, and in self-defence I shut myself up in my music room and turned my mind once again to composition. I was too aware of how his eyes followed me about, of his small attentions and how he was obviously trying to win my confidence. Already my compositions were being accepted. A song cycle *Rose of the World* was published by Enoch. The music was set to a poem by Mrs Tom Kelly. She was well known in society and although she had been offered a hundred pounds for the poem she preferred that I should set it to music. It was arranged for me to give a concert at the Bechstein Hall, which is now the Wigmore Hall. John Coates sang the cycle, and it was well received. I played a Brahms piano quartet with the Kruse Quartet and Schumann's *Etudes Symphoniques*. Toby really was musical, and I realised that I was stupid to shut him out from my music altogether. He was a good critic, and gradually I began to let him hear my compositions as they took form.

It was a great day for me when I received the following letter from Caruso. He was at that time the idol of the musical world, and loved by all who knew him.

Finale

Hotel Cecil,
July 6th.

Dear Madam,

My Maestro has already played to me your nice little things, but I should much like it if you care to come to play yourself for me. Anytime in the afternoon five to six p.m. when I am not singing I shall be pleased to see you.

Yours faithfully,

ENRICO CARUSO

Toby was as excited as I was; for the first time his arms were around me and he kissed me.

'Tom would do that if he were here,' he turned away rather brusquely.

I persuaded him to take me out to dinner that night—the first time, I think, that we had ever been out together. The old constraint had vanished and he even began to tell me a little about himself. I asked him where he went to school—and his expression changed, the ease had gone and the evening was spoiled.

Back at home he helped me to reply to Caruso, and I fixed an afternoon two days ahead. Toby was patient with me as I discussed what I should wear, and in the end, I remember, I wore white, with a large hat—and hats were really large then—it was a straw hat with black ribbon and a profusion of cherries. It gave me confidence.

The hat was a lucky choice. Instead of an awkward pause, Caruso seemed to focus on the cherries, pretended to pick and eat one—and by then my shyness had gone!

He was so kind and so friendly that I could only feel delight when he asked me to accompany him in my cycle *The Rose of the World*. He called in his accompanist, introduced us and asked him

to listen. It has a very difficult piano part and much of it solo. There were five songs and he sang them all magnificently, but the English words troubled him.

'If you can get them translated into Italian I would sing them in public this week, also in America when I return; but in English, no. Can you do that?'

'Of course! Tomorrow you shall have them.' I was quite reckless in my excitement without, for the moment, the slightest idea who could do them in so short a time. I reached home in a state of exaltation.*

Toby brought me down to earth.

'Stop being starry-eyed. You have got to think, and think quickly. Translations take time.'

Then it came to me in a flash. Herbert Thompson, now Sir Herbert—he would help me. Toby rushed out and sent him a telegram explaining what had happened, and I was restless and unsettled until the answer came. Herbert arrived in person.

'Now, Adelina, what is all this?' He took my arm and made me explain calmly.

'As it happens, I know somebody—Antonio Cippico, the Italian poet. We will go and see him.'

Cippico was delightful, and a great friend of Herbert's. He at once promised to translate the songs by the next day and when I called next morning they were ready. I took them to Caruso and we ran through them; we were both delighted with the way Cippico had dealt with them. With Caruso singing the songs I was prompted to send them also to Jean de Reszke in Paris. He wrote back a charming letter saying he would sing and teach them. Soon in England Ben Davies and many tenors were singing them. I felt very proud then, but I am not now. My composition was in its infancy, although I made more money then than I have since, with far better work.

Finale

Just at this time I was asked to organize a concert in Hampstead for charity. It caused me many a nightmare. A number of artists gave me their services free, amongst them my cousin Landon Ronald and Lady Tree. She promised to recite and I knew she would be a great draw. On the morning of the concert Lady Tree rang up to say she was unable to recite.

'Lady Tree, how dreadful! What has happened? Are you not well?'

'Not too well, my dear.'

'Everyone will be so disappointed! The house is full and of course everyone is coming especially to hear you!' I was desperate; already two singers had fallen out.

'Ah, this is bad—and there is a bouquet?'

'But of course. How else could we show our gratitude?'

I turned on the charm; she adored to be made a fuss of. I felt she was beginning to waver.

'I will send a carriage and someone to fetch you.'

I pressed home my advantage until she agreed to come. With a sigh of relief I put down the receiver.

The public does not realize the pitfalls of a concert like that, with some sixteen to twenty artists. Artists are truly generous and kind, but when no fee is paid there is always a risk. Perhaps at the last minute they are offered a large fee to appear elsewhere, a contract which it would be unbusinesslike to ignore. What easier than a sore throat or a headache! One cannot blame them; so much is asked of them in the name of charity, yet like others they still have to live.

I like to feel she felt that the effort was well worth while. She was a huge success and reduced the audience to roars of laughter; they called for her again and again.

'What a character!'

Toby, whom I persuaded to act as her escort, returned home



Sir Adrian Boult conducted when I broadcast the Schumann Concerto during the war.



*To Adeline de Lara
 With my warm affection
 and admiration Myra Hess*

In 1946 I played the Schumann *Variations* with Myra Hess at one
 of the National Gallery concerts.

looking quite exhausted and mixed himself a drink.

'Her vitality quite exhausts me. I found her quite enchanting.'

'Not *too* enchanting!' The words were out before I could stop them. He put down his glass and came towards me, a strange expression on his face.

'No, no, of course not.' In panic I turned to my piano but he was there before me.

'Adelina——' there was something desperate in his voice.

The next moment I was in his arms, all the doubt and uncertainty of months swept away. Tom and the children were temporarily forgotten. I knew now that this "feeling" I had been subconsciously fighting ever since I knew him, was not dislike—I realized that we could not live together on the old basis.

Quite suddenly he pushed me from him. I came from the momentary madness to see a man whom I hardly recognised. The kindness had left his face; it was strained and had a remote look. I thought he was ill, but he turned angrily away.

'Are you *blind*, Adelina—surely you have sensed something strange about me?'

His voice was scathing, and I was hurt and bewildered. And then he told me of his life. It explained so much of what had passed between us, of our antipathy and our attraction. Toby was a hermaphrodite. Until he was twenty he had been brought up as a girl. His mother had died at his birth and his father had been callously indifferent, leaving him entirely to the care of an ayah. When finally it was decided he should undergo an operation, his father disowned him. The impact of his story shocked me into complete silence, and I failed to realize how painful his life—and the telling of it—had been. While I stared stupidly he went out of the room and left the house.

Of course, at the back of my mind I had known such things did happen—but not to anyone one knew. Why had he not

Finale

explained? Did other people know, did Tom know? Was that why he never minded leaving me with Toby? A terrible, overwhelming feeling of shame flooded over me. I had to find him, to talk to him again.

Emma ended my search in the kitchen.

'He went out long ago. You look tired and had better go to bed.'

Dear Emma, nobody could have been kinder or more patient during the days that followed, days of anxiety, for Toby did not come back, nor did he send me any word.

I tried to work but could settle to nothing. I had a concert looming in the north but did nothing about it. Of all concertos it was the Schumann. Yet three days before the concert my mood changed. I began to practise, reminding myself how Clara Schumann must have suffered as she played the same work after all her tragedy. I wallowed in an orgy of self-pity, yet knew I could not face the public.

The day before the concert Toby walked in, just as if nothing had happened, except there was a stone wall around him and he looked at me with hard, unfriendly eyes.

'Why are you not up north?'

'I am not going—I don't feel well.'

'Have you told them?'

'No.'

'Then you had better pull yourself together; we will catch the night train. For goodness' sake, Adelina, stop being a child!'

The scorn in his voice stung me as it was meant to, and pride came to my rescue. It carried me over the journey, on to the platform, through the concert. But once back in the suite the reaction came and I broke down, crying for myself and for Toby. He was kind then, and perhaps realized the shock it had all been. Gradually, he filled in the gaps in the story of what his life had

been—of his lonely years in India, his misery when he was sent to a girls' school in England, his withdrawal into himself, his father's cruelty, and after the operation, his readjustment to a new way of life.

The journey back to London was a nightmare. We both tried to behave as if the story had not been told, but it hung heavy between us. I felt ill and wretched and suppose the shock of it all had been greater than I realized. Whatever it was, I collapsed as soon as I reached home. I was ill for some time, only aware that Toby was near me, that he nursed me with the gentleness of a woman.

Often I turned from him with a sudden realization which must have hurt him deeply. He could not know that I longed to be away from him in order to readjust myself.

Sooner than I expected, Tom came home full of his tour, full of success and blind to the difference in me. How glad I was to see him! For quite a time after his return we had the house to ourselves. Toby took himself off for a "holiday", as he put it to Tom. To me he offered no explanation, he never said goodbye, just vanished. At first it was a joy to be able to do exactly as I liked, to get up when I wanted, to do the flowers, arrange things to my personal taste. I told myself I did not want to see Toby any more. I knew in my heart it was not true. I missed him; I felt worried and anxious about him.



Lily Langtry

I'VE signed another contract.' Tom came back one morning for lunch.

'A good one?' I hardly looked up from the piano; by his manner I thought he meant the West End.

'Australia, Tasmania and New Zealand.'

I played a discord and he looked at me sharply.

'Now, Adelina, no scenes!'

'But, Tom, you will be gone for months!' I got up in my agitation. It was not really what I wanted to say. I knew if he left me now it would be hopeless. We would never really come together again.

'What plans have you for me?' I turned away so he would not see my face when he answered.

'Oh, you have your career—the boys and Toby to look after you.'

'Toby, always Toby—it was you I married!'

Then, lest I should say things I would later regret, I hurried from the room.

Poor Tom, I know he had his career, and the anxiety of making money for us all; but I did feel there was no need to be away so much and that he was carelessly stupid about the situation.

But I have never been able to be angry for very long. By the afternoon post a letter came from Lily Langtry and I rushed to find him.

'Mrs Langtry has asked me to go and see her at the Savoy!'

'Good—she told me she wanted to meet you. Put on your prettiest things. She is very beautiful.'

As if wishing to make things up to me, he was all kindness and anxious to buy me new clothes. We shopped eagerly.

Lily Langtry was, I suppose, the greatest of all Edwardian beauties. Tom helped me write my letter of acceptance and I could hardly wait for the next afternoon when I was to meet the woman who had attracted the attentions of a King.

'So you are Tom's wife!'

She was full of charm and kindness, and from that very first moment we were friends. She told me how highly she thought of Tom's acting, and I told her how angry I had been when he told me he was off across the world again.

'It is no good trying to tie him, my dear—you should know, with your career.'

Before we parted she had asked me to visit her at Ascot. I had heard so much about her home, I was excited at the thought of seeing it. A fortnight later I set off.

I was met at the station by Mrs Langtry's chauffeur with an electric brougham, which was a novelty in those days. For the benefit of those who have never seen one, I can only describe it as resembling a horse-drawn brougham with the shafts taken from it, and a front curling back towards the driver who sat low down instead of on a box. It moved slowly and silently, propelled by a number of electric batteries. It was the height of luxury. As we glided up to the house, I saw it to be large and beautiful, standing in the most lovely grounds. To my surprise my hostess received me with her lovely hair loose about her shoulders.

Finale

'You must forgive me! Always, before I have it washed, I soak it in oil for about a week. It means of course I have to be more or less invisible, but I felt you would not mind.'

'Mind! I feel privileged!'

The circumstances of Lily Langtry were very different from mine. There seemed to be servants everywhere, discreetly hovering in the background. My bedroom was large, bigger than my own music-room, with deep comfortable chairs. The chintz covers and curtains were rose-patterned; roses filled the vases, and there were candles everywhere in silver candlesticks which caught the light.

'Dinner will be at eight.' With that she left me to enjoy all the luxury which surrounded me. Already a maid had unpacked for me. Before long the hip-bath was carried in, placed on a huge mat in front of the fire; then came shining copper urns, full of hot water. There was no gas or electricity. Soon all was ready and I was left to the comfort of a hot bath by a bright coal fire.

'In here, Madame.'

The butler was waiting when I came down to take me into the huge double drawing-room. It was decorated in white, and again masses of roses filled the vases. The room was lighted by eighteen tall oil lamps. Sometimes I used to get down early enough to watch the footman lighting them. It took him nearly ten minutes. I could not help wondering how long it took the man whose job it was to fill and trim the lamps for the whole house!

The first evening my hostess wore a wrap because of her hair, but on the second she appeared in a luxurious evening dress, her hair glossy and lovely, worn parted on one side with a knot at her neck. She wore, of course, her famous pearls, which she told me cost fifty thousand pounds! They were given to her by

the same man who gave her a well-known white yacht, and left her all his fortune. Or tried to; I seem to recollect that the will was upset by his sisters, and Mrs Langtry had only the pearls. They were so pure and so beautiful they gave me a strange sensation. I have never before or since seen such lovely pearls.

The first morning after my arrival she took me round to see her racehorses; there were twenty-five of them and she raced under the name of Mr Jersey; she was known, of course, as the "Jersey Lily". The stables were wonderful and she seemed to have an intimate knowledge of all the horses. The grooms and stable boys were pleased to see her; she had a kind word for them individually, knowing all about their families. The impression Lily Langtry gave me was that she was a very human person. She had that great gift of sincere interest in what others said to her. She was highly cultured and very musical and soon had me playing to her for hours on end. A brilliant conversationalist with a great sense of humour, I found her fascinating.

It was, of course, public knowledge that an intimate friendship existed between her and King Edward VII, and every day wonderful flowers came from Windsor. She told me a great deal about this friendship, for we had become very close, and said how gracious and kind Queen Alexandra was to her; it had puzzled me at first to see large photographs inscribed to her by Her Majesty.

How I enjoyed that visit! It all appealed to my imagination, for Lily Langtry lived lavishly at Regal Lodge. The butler and footman in livery stood behind her chair at meals, we had wonderful wines, and a five- or six-course dinner every night—a change indeed from doing the cooking at home myself! The table was set with brilliant crystal, masses of tall flowers, pale coloured candles in silver branch candlesticks, and on all the linen an embroidered crown.

Finale

Gladstone was another great friend of Lily Langtry; he greatly admired her and wrote often. She told me she was going to leave these letters to the British Museum.

At dinner one day a new dish was put before me.

'What are these?' I said in my usual way when I was ignorant.

'Plovers' eggs.'

'How extraordinary!' I exclaimed.

'Extraordinary?' She looked amused.

'Mrs Cornwallis-West gave me the first poached egg I ever had, when I played for her at Ruthin Castle as a child—and now another famous beauty introduces me to plovers' eggs.'

'Then I shall write and tell her of it tomorrow!'

Mrs Langtry laughed. Sure enough, back came the reply from Mrs Cornwallis-West, that she had never forgotten the incident!

When we parted we promised to meet again in London. I had told her a little about Toby, and she asked me to bring him with me when we were all in London.

'He may not come back!' I explained.

'He will,' she said as she kissed me goodbye.

How right she was, I discovered as soon as I got in the house. Everything was in apple-pie order again, with as many signs of Toby's return as of Tom's preparations for departure.

'Had a nice time?'

Toby came upon me before I had quite time to conceal my reaction, and for the life of me I could not hide the sudden gladness it gave me to see him.

'It is time you came back——' there was criticism in his voice as he bent to pick up my bag, and instantly the gladness left me. After that he seemed to avoid me as much as possible, unless Tom was there. Then as usual we did everything together; theatres, last parties, farewells for Tom, packing and unpacking, saying goodbye to the boys, plans and arrangements for the future.

I felt wretched and uncertain, dreading the time when Toby and I would have to face up to each other alone.

But I need not have worried; once we had seen Tom on the boat he became more like his old self. He comforted me when I cried a little, took my arm like any brother, and once back home was kindness itself. For a time life went on smoothly. Then little by little he began to organize my life, organize my playing. As long as I did everything he wanted all was peaceful, but the moment I showed a will of my own his temper flared up, or he would put a barrier of displeasure between us which I could not endure.

'Mrs Langtry wants us to lunch at the Savoy tomorrow,' I told him one morning after receiving the invitation. I suppose my face showed delight.

'And I do not wish to lunch with Mrs Langtry.'

'But why? Please, Toby—to please me.'

Somehow he had damped my pleasure. When he did consent to come I was nervous and showed it. From the moment they met he was at his worst. I wanted them so much to like each other but felt that they clashed at once. It was not a happy meal, although Lily Langtry carried it through with the grace of a practised hostess. She even invited us to go to the Derby with her and I accepted. Toby remained silent until we were driving home; then we quarrelled. He told me that Mrs Langtry was not the right friend for me. For the sake of peace I gave in over the Derby, but I refused to give up Mrs Langtry. His triumph over the Derby had shown me clearly that he was jealous. I taxed him with my discovery and so set fire to a welter of emotions which bound me to his influence for many years to come.



No More Concertos

TIME has a habit of sweeping by when one's life is very full; so much seemed to crowd itself into the years that followed, that I hardly had time to take count. I have a confused idea of numerous concert engagements, Aberdeen, Newcastle, Manchester, Liverpool, long journeys, delays by fog, the children's holidays, trying to be both mother and professional pianist.

Then came a day after a difficult period between Toby and myself of clashing wills, strain and heartbreak, when Toby suddenly told me he had become engaged.

'Engaged?'

'Yes—any objection?'

Again I saw the old hardness I knew so well—the defences were up.

'No—no, why should I object?'

My defences went up also.

'Congratulations.'

I even managed to smile. I suppose something about the smile softened him, for he altered and came towards me.

'Believe me, Adelina, it is better for us both—this situation is very difficult. I shall always look after you while Tom is away—I shall still interfere in your affairs.'

At that the tension broke. My feeling were mixed, as they always were concerning Toby. I threw renewed energy into my music to steady myself.

One of my most vivid recollections about this time is of the banquets given by William Whiteley. I had come to know the family very well through my aunt Russell and it soon became a habit of theirs to engage me to play, at a full concert fee, as was frequently done in those days. First I was expected to be present at the dinner parties, which I thoroughly enjoyed. During the eight or ten courses, William Whiteley, who was a total abstainer, would sit at the head of the table, a glass of water by him, while his guests drank vintage wines. Nothing gave him greater pleasure than to see others enjoying themselves. He had the gift of making one feel the most interesting and important person in the world. As I watched him surrounded by all his servants, distinguished friends, beautiful women, and glittering jewels, I found it hard to connect this "universal provider" with the story my aunt often told. When she first knew him he kept a little shop, which he swept out himself, and put the shutters up when closing time came.

'It was because he paid as much deference to a woman with twopence to spend as to a great lady arriving in her carriage-and-pair, that he soon had to expand his shop,' she always maintained.

Of course, one met many commercial giants at these parties, such as Sir John Dewar of whisky fame, and Sir Thomas Lipton. Sir Thomas was very popular and in my opinion rather spoilt. He did not mind what he said or how he disconcerted one; but because he was so genial and charming he was usually forgiven.

Once he embarrassed me very much. I had been fighting a sore throat and had rubbed my neck with embrocation. It had made my neck very red, and in my low dress this could be

Finale

seen, a fact of which I was very conscious. During one of those silences one gets at dinner parties, I became aware that Sir Thomas was staring at me.

‘Who’s been bitin’ yer neck?’

Suddenly his voice rang out, and all eyes, much to my confusion, turned to me.

When the time came for me to play, Mr Whiteley led me into the drawing-room and up to the Grand piano. He announced that I would begin with Chopin’s *No. 5 Nocturne*. There was the usual polite clapping, silence, and I started to play. For the first few bars all was well; then Sir Thomas, who was sitting near me, began talking in a loud voice to his companion. Someone else joined in, and soon the whole room was talking. I could hardly hear myself play and it was impossible to concentrate. Angered by such a situation, I stopped playing and stood up. A sudden hush fell over the whole room. I certainly had their attention now!

‘Mr Whiteley’—I turned and spoke directly to him, and can remember my words to this day:

‘I am sorry, but it is impossible for me to play from memory while conversation is going on. Furthermore, since no one is listening it is wasting your money, and my time, so I had better go.’

With that I proceeded to leave the piano, thereby causing a perfect outcry of apologies, regrets and protestations from the guests. One of his sons came over and joined Mr Whiteley, who was greatly distressed.

Of course I smiled and returned to the piano and restarted the Chopin. This time there was utter silence, and at the end enormous applause. I had to give many encores. I think few people had realized I was being paid for my performance!

It was not long after this that something tragic happened to me, which unfortunately I allowed to affect my music for

many years. If only at that time I had realized, as I did later, that it happens to most pianists, I would have acted so differently.

Landon Ronald had asked me to play the Schumann Concerto with him at Birmingham at one of the usual smoking concerts. The piano, I found, was a Broadwood on which I had not played for many years, and was unused to the touch, and this may have added to my troubles.

The rehearsal on the morning of the concert went perfectly well and, in good spirits, I lunched with Landon.

'Adelina, you played the concerto splendidly; I am looking forward to tonight.'

Landon was graciousness itself.

'I like the interpretation you gave.'

'That comes of having studied with Madame Schumann.' I was positively glowing with pleasure.

'You know, I do not suppose you will believe it, but the last three times I have conducted the Schumann Concerto, *the pianist's memory has failed* during the performance!'

'Really!'

Something had happened to my voice; I felt a queer chill run down my spine. As we rose to leave my knees felt like cotton wool!

I went to my room and tried to put the idea from my mind, but over and over again the words drummed in my head—*the pianist's memory failed!* I tried to read, I tried to sleep. I turned my mind resolutely away from the thought. Everything had been all right at the rehearsal, it would be at the performance; of course it would be, I owed it to Birmingham, the town which had given me so much. Having argued myself into a better frame of mind, I reached the concert hall in a happier state.

The hall was packed and full of smoke, my pet aversion! Landon led me on, and an ovation greeted me. I had not played

Finale

there for some years. Comforted, I sat down, Landon raised his baton, the first movement began. All went well, although I still was not happy with the Broadwood touch. After a Steinway it seemed heavy. The smoke began to worry me. I played the second movement, and began the third. I was making fine progress, Landon was conducting superbly. And then, at the repetition of the brilliant third subject—it happened! I played a phrase with both hands an octave lower than it is written. Only one bar—but I lost my head. It put me right out—panic seized me.

‘Oh, my God!’

Landon’s voice reached me. He was emotional and excitable like me. I saw him wave his baton; the orchestra stopped. It was too much—I rushed from the platform, blindly found the artists’ room and burst into tears. It had really happened—to me! If only Landon had come to me then, I might have recovered myself. No doubt he thought it better to leave me to pull myself together. Unable to face him, although I was down for a group of Chopin solos in the second part, I fled to my hotel.

To this day I do not know what was said or what happened. Now I realize it was the worst thing I could have done. I blamed only myself, but after all these years other musicians have told me Landon was to blame. He should have gone on directing his orchestra, and I could have come in again.

Next morning I took the earliest train to London.

‘Whatever is the matter?’ Toby must have thought I was ill. I could hardly speak and he whisked me, sobbing, off to bed.

‘You’re making too much of it—it could happen to anybody. The only fault you made was not to go back.’

‘I shall never play a concerto again!’ I refused to be comforted.

He was so worried about me that he made his sister come and sit with me, and even sent for my aunt Russell. She was furious with Landon.

'He ought never to have told you about the others just before you played—what was he thinking of?'

But nothing made it any better, the whole affair gained exaggerated importance in my mind. The fact that it had happened at Birmingham of all places, and in the Schumann Pianoforte Concerto, I think made it out of all proportion.

Perhaps if I had received the following letter from Landon then, my nerve would have returned. It was twenty-seven years before I could bring myself to play a concerto again. Only when I did at last play successfully the Schumann Concerto from memory with Claud Powell, conductor of the Guildford Symphony Orchestra, did I write to Landon and tell him. It was a few years before his death. This letter shows how foolish I had been to let my nerves get the better of me for so long. If only I had had it sooner!

The Guildhall School of Music,
John Carpenter Street,
Victoria Embankment, E.C.4.
25th October, 1935

My dear Adelina,

Thanks for your letter. I am very happy to know that you gave such a good performance of the Schumann and had such a fine success.

I had no idea that you had been suffering under such a delusion for twenty-seven years!

I call it a delusion, because surely you must know that the greatest artists that have ever lived suffered from loss of memory from time to time. I could tell you of dozens who played with me during a long career, who have broken down, but if I mention the names of Ysaye and Cortot, surely that will suffice.

Finale

These things will occur with the best regulated artists, and I cannot take it seriously that you have suffered for all these years from a little lapse of memory about which I had entirely forgotten.

With affectionate greetings,

Always yours,

LANDON RONALD

My son Alan came home and went down with a sharp attack of influenza and congestion. Miserable as I was, I threw myself into nursing him. I slept on his floor at night and would let no one help me. Brooding over my mishap I became more and more depressed. As Alan got better and my resistance grew lower, I easily fell victim to a chill, which developed into double-pneumonia and pleurisy. Soon there were two nurses in the house and as I got worse Toby cabled Tom in far-off Australia—poor Tom, he had been away so long it must have given him a terrible shock. The crisis came—the crisis they had all been fighting.

From a long way off I heard Toby begging me not to die. I was aware of Herbert Thompson holding my hand, and I dimly remember a determination to live. I did not know until afterwards that my father-in-law and sisters-in-law were waiting outside my room, sure that the end had come. I was terribly ill for weeks and always, always thinking of the Schumann Concerto.

Herbert sent me champagne and brandy from his father's cellar. I was given a tablespoon every two hours. They gave me oysters and cod-liver oil, but the pleurisy remained serious. At last an operation was decided upon, but another specialist advised against it, and gradually I recovered.

It was good to feel returning strength, to sit up in bed, to see Toby and Herbert happy again. To be waited on and fussed over,

to have Alan and Denis to visit me. I was ordered a change of air, and Tony and Herbert took me to St Margaret's Bay and wheeled me about in a bath-chair. Three weeks of sea air did its work—but it was a year before I fully regained my strength, and my heart was affected. But I could not forget the shock of Birmingham, and I allowed it to darken my days. With news that I was really well again, engagements began coming in. Stubbornly I turned down all pianoforte concerto requests, accepting only solo ones. Oddly enough, I had no fear of my memory failing in these.

'You are being quite unreasonable!' Toby argued.

'You do not have to play——' I defended myself.

'I think if you are going on like this, you had better give up your career for a time. We will live in France,' Toby suggested, perhaps in exasperation.

'Oh, could we?' The thought of the sun and being away from the ordeal of playing, suddenly appealed to me.

Toby knew, even better than I, that I still had to guard against pleurisy, and he feared the winter and a recurrence. Tom cabled his approval and we flung ourselves into making plans. Soon Toby announced he had heard of a house in the Pas de Calais which he promptly took.

One thing made me hesitate. I had become Vice-President of the Professional Musicians' Début Society. The President, Countess Vanden Heuvel, a friend of my early début days, had founded it. She was herself a singer and composer. There was a committee of well-known musicians, and one critic, Hermann Klein of the *Sunday Times*. We gave auditions and engaged the Aeolian Hall for concerts, and patrons lent us their houses for musical parties. We had no expenses, so the concerts paid for themselves and we charged a small fee to the débutantes. The Society was most successful. The Countess often told the story

Finale

of how she asked Queen Alexandra to become our patron and the acceptance she got. To quote the Countess:

'One morning there was great excitement, in our road, Warrington Crescent, Maida Vale. A clattering of horses' hoofs, people rushing from their houses to look, as up to my door galloped a magnificent horse ridden by a handsome officer in a smart uniform. He held a document in his hand. He was the "King's Messenger" and, saluting me, handed me the Queen's acceptance!'

I was most anxious to keep in touch with the Society, and when I realized that I could come over to England from time to time I felt relieved.

Toby and Alan went on ahead with the furniture and I followed later with Denis. My left lung was giving me trouble and I was running a temperature. Added to that, I had by then five Blue Russian short-hair cats and took them with me.

Denis was wonderful; although he was only eleven, he took my temperature on board, looked after the cats and me, and behaved like a grown man. At Boulogne, Toby met us with a curious looking horse-and-cart—to give me the right rural atmosphere, as he explained! There was a flash of lightning, large spots of rain, the cats were wailing, and I was tired. Quite firmly I demanded a cab. At last it was forthcoming, drawn by a sad horse. We wound our way past Napoleon's Monument, through Wimereux and Wimille, up and up in the most terrific thunderstorm. Eventually we reached "La Trésorerie", later the site of flying bombs and V.2's. On seeing the cottage my heart sank; the maid had vanished because it was so lonely. It was lit by lamps and candles; there was no bathroom, only stone floors and every discomfort! However, things seemed better in the morning. We threw down our Indian rugs, Toby found a maid, the sun

shone, the garden and country proved lovely. A few days later my Steinway piano, a present from Sir Herbert, arrived from Paris and I began to feel more at home.

With time on my hands I read a good many poems, some of which I set to music. I worked hard at song writing and sent ballads to London publishers. Certain words would set the music going in my head until I had set it down. *Love's Gardens*, *Birds at their Matins*, *Into my Life*, *Her Garden Glows*, all belonged to this period.

It was at this juncture Toby announced he had arranged to get married.

'I have been engaged long enough. The wedding will be at Boulogne, and we'll go to Paris for our honeymoon.'

'And after?'

'I'll bring her here.'

I think I was too astonished to protest, in fact to say anything at all. I went out into the garden and picked flowers for vases already full. When I came back to the house, Toby had left. It was three weeks before he returned with his bride, a pleasant well-bred girl; but we had nothing in common. I was, however, past being surprised at anything Toby did, and I was not going to give him the satisfaction of knowing what I thought of his action.

Daily I became stronger and was soon going for long walks, and it was from the sand-dunes of Wimereux we watched one of the first aeroplanes. The pilot was Monsieur Le Febre. It was a day of waiting, disappointments, partings, meetings, hunger, excitement and finally breath-taking amazement. The aeroplane looked like a giant wooden toy, a glorified insect with awkward wings. We arrived at seven in the morning and eventually M. Le Febre and his wife turned up. They were obviously devoted. Time and again they embraced and said goodbye, time and again the

Finale

machine refused to start. There would be gesticulating, more goodbyes, anxious faces. Hours passed and still the machine refused to move.

I do not mean to be disrespectful to a very brave man, but it became almost humorous in its bathos as the performance was repeated so many times. Our hunger grew, but we could not leave until something had happened. At last, about five o'clock in the afternoon, after more farewells, M. Le Febre got in again. We were rewarded with grindings, splutterings, jerks, and the plane rose from the earth; but only for a yard or two, and down she came. Hope was renewed and by six-thirty she finally rose again and flew quite a hundred yards! It was a wonderful moment—I can hardly express what I felt. Exactly a fortnight later, M. Le Febre died a horrible death in the same machine.

Herbert came over to stay with us, and we discovered a very beautiful white house in a lovely garden which was for sale. I promptly fell in love with it, and Herbert asked me if I would accept it as a present, adding that he would love to come and stay sometimes. I called it "Shalimar". It was, of course, a crazy venture, for it needed a large staff and we had only one maid! We moved in with the family, a dog, two cats, and felt as excited as children. I was given a Louis Quinze drawing-room suite, which made the house look lovely. It was far too large, and we filled it with friends. There were two large salons, one leading down to the other by white steps—it reminded me of Lily Langtry's drawing-room. There was a little stream running through the gardens, where kingfishers flew and birds came to bathe. The nightingales sang at night, the roses bloomed in masses on the terrace, and it was a happy time. The boys went to college in Boulogne, while I composed, and went backwards and forwards to London for concerts or committee meetings.

Then came the news that Tom was coming home. I had not

seen him for five years; with a pang I realized what strangers we were. We ordered champagne and many were the preparations. The boys were, of course, wildly excited at the thought of seeing their father again. •

‘I will go to meet him at Boulogne,’ Toby said. His voice sounded strained and we avoided each other’s eyes.

I filled in the time of waiting by preparing everything a hundred times. I was restless and ill at ease. So much had happened since he left me and emotionally I had grown up. What would life offer us—how would we bridge those years of separation?

When he came, I think pity for him made everything quite plain and easy. He was not the Tommy Kingston I had known, but a man suffering under a great strain, overworked and unbelievably aged.

There was nothing to do but take him at once to a London specialist. After a long examination I was told the worst. Overwork had caused a nervous breakdown too long ignored; there was little hope of recovery. There was no mistaking the specialist’s meaning.



Sadness and My First World War

AFTER a nightmare of house-hunting I found a house near Battle in Sussex. Sadly I returned to "Shalimar", and sold my carpets, furniture, curtains and the Steinway Grand as well as the house itself. I walked for the last time down the long terrace, carrying my cats in their baskets, with tears streaming down my face. I could not foresee that soon "Shalimar" would become a hospital for officers during the first World War, or how in the second it would be blown to pieces.

I parted with Toby and his wife, with whom already things were not going well, and forlornly returned to England.

I took Tom to my father-in-law's house while I hurriedly prepared our new home; but before I could take him to it, he became very ill with pneumonia, and on 2nd August, 1911, he died at the age of only forty-one. Although I had known there was little hope of his recovery, the suddenness of his death was wholly unexpected and I was completely dazed; there had been the shock of seeing him on his return so changed as to seem almost a stranger; then I had been busy preparing for our life together again, with an invalid husband instead of the Tommy I had known, and then, so unexpectedly, his sudden death. All this gave me a feeling of unreality, from which I was slow to emerge.

Somehow I picked up the thread of life again, realizing for the first time that I was quite alone with the two boys. There was not even Toby to advise me. With a heavy heart I settled at "Woodcroft", which the boys loved. I still had my cats and I kept poultry and bred Siamese cats as well. I continued to compose and worked on my song-cycle, *Songs of Two Lives*. I took a studio in Great Marlborough Street, in London, where I gave piano lessons. Every week the need for money was becoming more acute. I remember the advertisement I used, which ran as follows:—

Madame Adelina de Lara
'receives pupils for
Advance Pianoforte playing
and also teaches the
Art of Pianoforte Accompaniment.

I soon had more pupils than I could manage, and this was satisfactory, for I still did not feel up to the wear and tear of touring and concert playing.

Then back into my rather lonely life came Toby. He wrote saying he had parted from his wife, 'and so, my dear Adelina, I suggest my sister and I come and live with you as before. I feel you need someone to look after you!' Did I?

Toby hardly gave me time to make up my mind, before he arrived. We had both suffered, I think; both knew each had something to give to the other. Soon it was almost as if we had never parted. Toby took over the running of the house, and began to order my life as of old. Again I let myself be dominated by him. My most pleasant recollections of Battle are of the doctor there, and my friendship with Warwick Deeping, his wife and his delightful sister who later served as a member of the Observer Corps and died in the second war. Warwick Deeping had the

Finale

most lovely garden, which gave me the greatest of pleasure.

With the return of Toby to look after things for me, I began to accept the concert engagements which crowded in, once it was known I was ready to begin again. It was at this juncture that I re-met Alexia Bassian who was a good *Lieder* singer. We formed a friendship which lasted many years, and it was through her that my son Denis met his future wife.

Alas, in 1913, Toby became restless again. With all my concert engagements he felt the house was too far from London. Once he had got the idea into his head I knew it was useless to argue. I put the house into agents' hands, although I had spent a great deal I could ill afford on it. But I have always had a "the Lord will provide" attitude, a faith which has been amply rewarded.

Many people came to look over "Woodcroft", one of them being the singer Plunkett-Greene, whom I had already met professionally. He was surprised to find who Mrs Kingston was, and he and his wife stayed nearly all day, but in the end they did not take the house. I finally let it to some Army people, and sold it later. I fell in love with a small house at Betchworth. It had three acres of lovely garden and grass tennis courts. There was a grass hill where a farmer grazed his Jersey herd, and I made a cattery. I played tennis with the boys, who had by now left school.

I went to London weekly to teach, and arranged a series of afternoon concerts to be held at Claridge's. Drawing-room concerts and concerts at hotels, at which the cost of tickets was high, were popular just then. Under the direction of Ibbs & Tillett the series at Claridge's were sparkling affairs. They would begin at a quarter-to-five, but tea would be served at four o'clock, making it into a social event. I see from old programmes an impressive array of names.

UNDER THE DISTINGUISHED PATRONAGE OF

Lord and Lady Montagu of Beaulieu

Lady Douglas

• **Sir Frederick and Lady Hewitt**

Their Excellencies Colonel Don Pedro Suarez

and Mme Suarez

and so on.

At one of the series Alexia Bassian sang groups of songs by Dvorak, Rubinstein, Schubert and Arensky. Thorpe Bates, who became such a colourful musical comedy hero, delighted the audience. He it was who later gave the first performance of my Dramatic Scena *Song of Life and Death* at the Bechstein Hall. Algernon Lindo played my Pianoforte Suite *In the Forest*, and there was Brahms' *Liebeslieder Walzer for Four Voices and Pianoforte (Four Hands)*, Op. 52, in which Alexia Bassian, Edith Clegg, John Booth and Thorpe Bates, Algernon Lindo and myself all took part. Then followed another group of songs. No light-weight concert!

The last of the series was held at Queen's Hall, for which I engaged Kreisler and at once ran into difficulties. His fee was one hundred and fifty pounds and five guineas for his accompanist. I was anxious to play a sonata with him, but this he refused to do, saying he would only play solos. So I engaged a young pianist, Sydney Rosenbloom, to play Brahms' *Variations on a Theme of Haydn*, Op. 56, for two pianofortes, with me. Kreisler also demanded an artist's room to himself. However, once everything was settled to his comfort he played as only Kreisler could play: *Devil's Trill* by Tartini, and *Adagio and Fugue in G Minor* for violin alone by Bach.

Queen's Hall with its narrow red plush seats and unforgettable atmosphere was packed to overflowing, and it is of interest to note that the programmes cost only sixpence, printed on

Finale

beautiful art paper, carrying large photographs of us all, with the words of the songs printed both in their original language and English! I cannot remember how many hours these concerts ran, but when I look at the length and number of songs and the other items, I imagine well over three hours! I think I must give an example of the translation of one of the songs of the day: *Vergebliches Standchen*, set to music by Brahms.

He: *Fair good even, my darling!*
Good even, my dear!
I love thee more and more:
Come down and ope the door:
Let me in, let me in,
And to thee be near!

She: *Nay, nay, that cannot be;*
My door is locked fast.
Wisely my mother says
I'd rue it all my days
If I did, if I did,
What you ask!

He: *So chill is the night*
So icy the wind,
My heart's congealed with cold;
Love in such plight won't hold;
Heart's delight, be kind,
Come and ope the door!

She: *Nay, if thy love will not hold*
Hold thro' all,
Let it extinguished be;
Go home, nor think of me!
So good night, faint heart!

This sort of thing was typical, though of course some songs suffered in the translation! But if the words were poor, the setting made up for that.

It was June, 1914. Happily I went on playing, teaching, giving concerts, looking after my Siamese cats and gazing lazily at the Jersey herd.

Then the storm broke and life became a nightmare. First the horses were taken from around us, and I grieved over them. Then came the Zeppelins. I am the world's greatest coward, and my terror was intense. I shall never forget one sunny afternoon when my boys called out that a German airship was approaching. I rushed downstairs with a bottle of brandy in one hand and my crucifix in the other! As it came over the garden I quite thought that the Germans had come especially to kill us. I have often laughed since, for I must have looked so silly sitting on the stairs waving the bottle and crucifix about, nearly dying of fright, especially as the boys and Toby insisted on standing at the front door watching! However, soon after, I was busy organizing London concerts in aid of different war charities. I began a series at the Aeolian Hall in aid of the Blue Cross, for I could not forget the horses in the battle areas.

Then, later, when the Belgians were needing help, I organized a concert for them under the auspices of the *Daily Telegraph*. I arranged for twenty-five well-known artists to appear, including Mary Moore (Lady Wyndham), Hayden Coffin, and composers such as Guy d'Hardelot, Teresa del Riego and my second cousin Isidore de Lara. I wrote to all of them for their photographs, which were to be printed on the programme. Then I went down with 'flu. My bed was strewn with letters of agreement, late turns for the stars, and the hundred and one matters which have to be attended to when this sort of concert is arranged.

On the day of the concert, hoping against hope that everything

Finale

was under control, I went to the hall and was dismayed when most of the artists rushed at me declaring they *must* be first on the programme. Each seemed to have other engagements fifteen minutes after the concert opened! I was distracted. Mary Moore was particularly insistent and Hayden Coffin paced up and down, leaving in the end without singing. Finally I had to appeal to them all, explaining that I had still not recovered from 'flu. It had some effect—I think they felt a little ashamed. I had to accompany many singers who were singing my own songs, including John Booth who sang my *Song of Life and Death*.

The programme was full of patriotic numbers. I had composed specially for it a *March to the Heroic Belgians*, which opened the programme, played on the organ by Mr Mavon-Ibbs. There were such songs as *For England*, and *Fight, Fight, Fight*, sung by the picturesque opera star Mme. Ghita Corri; its composer, Kathleen Leigh, recited *Unconquerable (King Albert's Reply to the Kaiser)*, and Mme. Teresa del Riego sang a moving song she composed called *My Son*. The whole programme was in this vein. We finished with *There's Only One England*, and then Mme. Corri sang the Belgian National Anthem. By then the atmosphere was very emotional, and the concert was a tremendous financial success. I see that even an advertisement announcing the interval was, though peculiar, extremely patriotic!

'Interval of ten minutes, during which Boisselier's celebrated Belgian chocolates, and songs, will be sold for the Benefit of the Belgian fund.'

Isidor'e de Lara was splendid, and at the end he auctioned a programme signed by us all which had on the cover a large photograph of the King of the Belgians. The other photographs it contained are amusing now. Many of the hats worn by the artists were really as big as umbrellas, topped by a confused mass of flowers, lace and humming-birds!

During the war Isidore gave over a hundred concerts at Claridge's in aid of artists impoverished by the war. I played for him often, but he insisted that I should appear as "Mrs Shipwright", for he was afraid I would be mistaken for his divorced wife!

Meanwhile my son Denis, who was only sixteen, had come to me one night for my permission to join up. I said 'Yes', but my heart gave a twist. He would have gone anyway, I am sure, and I felt proud of him. After being rejected as too young at Aldershot and Chatham, although he said he was nineteen, he was accepted as despatch-rider in the Kent Cyclists Battalion. Alan joined up in 1915; so I had two sons in the war.

Toby soon craved for London, and as I had to give my music where it was wanted I moved to Golders Green, where for the rest of the war I was terrified by the Zeppelin raids. I organized Sunday night concerts at the Endsleigh Palace Hospital for Officers. Many artists helped me, including Olga Nethersole, Frederick de Lara and his wife, who gave little plays. I played for Nethersole at one of her war concerts at the Hampstead General Hospital and played to the wounded all over London. Then there were Lady Garvagh's "Thursdays" for the Prisoners of War. These were very distressing. Lord Charles Beresford went round telling the prisoners stories, then they had tea, and listened to music. Alexia Bassian and I gave many recitals together and I continued to teach and write more songs such as *A Red Rose of June*, *Red Lips Farewell*, which were frequently sung by well-known singers.

Some time before, Alexia had been chosen to sing my song-cycle, *Songs of Two Lives*, at the first concert given by the Society of Women Musicians. The President was Liza Lehmann, famous for her *In a Persian Garden*. She asked me to take part in their opening concert by accompanying one of my own song-

Finale

cycles. This made it a very special evening for me. Irene Scharrer was there, looking very lovely, and Ethel Smyth too, who, twenty years later, became my close friend.

Just before the war the Society had invited me to send an original manuscript of my own, as a representative woman composer, with works by Ethel Smyth, Liza Lehmann and other women-composers, to the International Exhibition at Leipzig. I chose my Piano Suite *In the Forest* (which has now been re-written and scored for string orchestra). After war broke out the first building that was burnt down was the British Section of the Exhibition, and I said goodbye to my manuscript. But a year after peace was declared back it came, with a note written on it in German to the effect that 'with some others it had been saved and I might be glad to have it back'. My song-cycle *Rose of the World* was also taken to the Front and played by a band, and when some years later I met the conductor who had scored it for the purpose and played it, I asked him for a copy of the parts.

'I haven't got them,' he said. 'They were blown up—and some of the chaps, too'—this was added, apparently, as an afterthought.

About 1916 I, like many other people in England, began to have money worries. Nothing was coming in, engagements were few and I was doing a great deal for charity. I was offered an engagement at the Marble Arch Cinema, and, as I always loved a new experience and was unaware of the pitfalls, I accepted. There were no rehearsals, a large bundle of music was placed beside me and changed at a sign from the conductor. I started off by dropping all the music on the floor, but struggled on while the conductor picked it up! It was a case of "the music must go on" to keep in unity with silent pictures.

I shared my irksome task with another professional pianist, and the climax came when he asked me one day if I would carry on over my time, as he had a rehearsal for a concerto at Queen's Hall.

I could not very well refuse. We used to change over without any break in the music. I finished my turn, played his, then mine again and still he did not come. I looked up at the conductor, he shrugged his shoulders and even looked sorry for me. Then, after six hours, the pianist arrived. I could say nothing then, as we changed hands; I was so tired, I went behind and sobbed and sobbed and could not stop. The manager brought me a drink and apologized; but I terminated my engagement at the end of the week.

In the meantime an offer came from the management of the Coronet Theatre, Notting Hill Gate, where the pianist alternated with the orchestra. I was told that good music only would be played and my name would be featured. I accepted, and was far happier. Later a well-known singer appeared every night. I used to change into evening dress and accompany on the stage. I gave auditions every Monday and worked from eleven in the morning to eleven at night. I had a beautiful Steinway and stayed at the Coronet for a year. I could have stayed on, but it was too much of a tie and meant returning home through the raids at night.

My next engagement was to tour the country and show the public what blind folk could do in the way of music—only the manager and I had our sight. This tour was organized by Lady Pearson, and I accompanied the singers and played solos. We had a concert every night, and a journey every day. Because of the popular appeal we were met by the mayor of each town, and given a civic reception in halls decorated with flags and flowers—cheques and money were often handed up to the platform after an appeal by the mayor. At first I found it depressing sitting down to meals with blind companions, but their spirit of cheerfulness overcame this. I remember one blind man, a violinist who had lost his sight in Vienna while studying. He had been a great reader and painter and found it hard to adapt himself. Many years

Finale

later I happened to broadcast with him and found that he had adjusted himself so well that he travelled everywhere alone and hardly realized that he was blind. The violinist and his wife are my friends Lord and Lady Kenswood.

At a seaside town we gave a performance at the theatre. A certain Countess stood listening from the wings when I went on to play. When I touched the notes a noise came forth like a street organ. I had to "sing" Chopin and end with a *Prelude* by Rachmaninoff. After an encore the Countess spoke to me, I angrily complained of the piano and discovered, too late, that it was her own!

In a small town in the North we were playing in a long narrow hall with only one exit. Zeppelins had been about the night before and people were on edge. I had just begun to play the Chopin *Nocturne No. 5* when all the lights went out. There was a gasp from the audience and I realized I *must* keep on playing. I continued, expecting every moment to hear an explosion. I went on—slower—slower—the silence was incredible. I was getting to the end, dreading it, when the lights went up. As I finished I heard cheers and shouts and the manager embraced me, saying I had saved a panic. I was certainly glad of the brandy and soda he brought me.

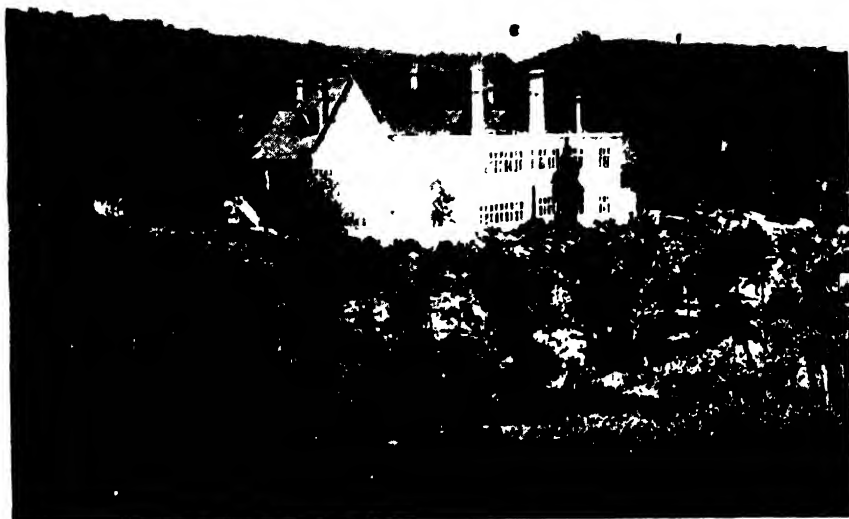
They were delightful times, in spite of the war. I have pleasant memories of kindly, courageous people, bearing the world's greatest loss, the loss of sight. I did two tours with them and was sorry when they ended.

Towards the end of the war I met Lady Hain and her daughter Kate at Alexia Bassian's studio. Kate had a good voice and I often accompanied her when we entertained wounded officers.

This was an anxious period. Both my sons now had commissions, and Alan, after a fight with German planes, had been reported missing. Weeks later I heard he was a prisoner. He was



Eileen Joyce came to live and to study with me: a brilliant and gifted pupil and the most charming of companions.



Above: for a time I was living near Boulogne where I had been given a delightful country house called *Shaliman*. *Below:* my sitting-room in the cottage at Woking where I have now settled.



one of the twenty-seven British officers who built the Holzminden tunnel in an escape attempt, and was mentioned in despatches.

Denis was luckier. He was shot down injured behind the lines and eventually came to a London nursing home where I could visit him. One day I took Kate Hain with me. In three weeks, she and Denis were engaged! I was delighted. I was fond of her then, and through the years, until her death quite recently, my affection increased. She was loyal, kind and generous to me.



First Broadcast

SOON after his marriage in 1918 my son persuaded me to move into a larger and more pleasant house. We found one in Hampstead which belonged to an artist, who later painted me. This house had a large room on the first floor, just asking for parties, so we entertained a good deal and had much music. I had become very friendly with the Marchioness Townshend and I often used to play at her house. The Marquis loved music and they gave delightful Sunday night suppers followed by music, and the Marchioness in turn came to my musical parties. The Hon. Mrs Dudley Ryder (now Mrs Du Pre), whom I met in 1916, used also to play for me. We often played at the Grotian Hall. She was a good violinist and for many years engaged me to play at her musical receptions in London. She was very beautiful; she was, and still is, one of the best-dressed women I have ever known. My gratitude to her is great as she has proved to be a real friend to me all my life. Sometimes in my professional life, it has been difficult to find time to show to my friends the appreciation I have always felt.

While I was at Hampstead my aunt Russell died at the age of seventy-seven. This was a great grief to me. She was such a character, and had a fine sense of humour. She remained Early

Victorian to the last; she always wore black, with white stockings and elastic-sided boots which were specially made for her, very expensive, and I thought very hideous. She wore bonnets with "bugles" (little black jet-pendants) and, trying them on me, would say I looked beautiful in them! She hated modern fashions and when she got angry she called me "my darling" with the accent on *darling*. My aunt numbered among her friends such artists as Melba, Calvé and Duse. I met Lopokova, the Russian dancer, there very often. I shall never forget the day when at a tea party one of the guests ventured to smoke. Aunt Russell's face was a study in indignation.

'Ladies! This has never happened before—smoking in *my* presence—I cannot allow it!'

The offender, who was famous, hastily apologized and put out her cigarette, looking like a small child.

Landon was devoted to his mother, who always insisted upon treating him as a small boy.

'My *darling*, don't rumple the antimacassar.'

'Poor darling Lan's tired; you amuse him, Tot'—her name for me.

He visited her every day after he returned from the Guildhall School of Music. Her death meant a great loss to us; I missed her and all she stood for.

It was soon after this, partly owing to financial worries (for I was never a good manager) and partly because I never really felt happy in the Hampstead house, that I took a furnished house at Gerrards Cross and then moved back again to a flat in Hampstead when Mathilde Verne appointed me principal teacher at her College of Music in Kensington. The work at the College proved delightful and the fees good. Miss Verne handed me over all her best pupils, for she wanted to play more at concerts. The Queen Mother, then the Lady Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon, had been studying

Finale

with her, and had not long left, so I just missed having her as a pupil. I had many talented and professional pupils, a large children's class, and also the Harmony Class in place of Thomas Dunhill who had just left. I gained much experience in teaching very young children in class, which at first alarmed me; but Miss Verne's method was thorough, and I soon got used to it. I remained at the College some eighteen months, until Mathilde Verne gave it up. She suggested I took it over, but I could not raise sufficient capital, and also felt it was too much of a risk and responsibility.

Just after I left the College, Toby was taken very ill, and removed to Hampstead Hospital for an operation. The operation left him delicate and I knew he would need care and attention. The strain of the war years had told upon me also, and the anxiety over my sons. I felt that for a time, at least, I would like to give up my playing. Toby's sister was now old and rather difficult, and so I engaged a companion and decided to move to the country. This time I rented a house in Surrey, but after a year, when visiting Herne Bay, I fell in love with the place. I found a little house to let on the cliffs and promptly took it as I loved the nearness of the North Sea. I still had several cats, which took up much of my time.

Denis, meanwhile, had entered Oxford University and later stood successfully for Parliament, being the youngest Conservative Member at that time. Subsequently he travelled to Africa, Egypt and Palestine. I was proud to learn that he had been made a Knight of Grace of the Order of St John of Jerusalem in England, receiving his insignia from the King at a famous Empire Investiture. Alan was a regular officer in the Royal Air Force, and served in Irak, Palestine, Egypt and Syria. He was awarded the D.F.C., and later became an officer of the Order of St John of Jerusalem.

Before I had been at Herne Bay for long I was invited to broad-

cast. It was a great excitement for me and I was asked to play with Harry Blech, a very fine violinist. Broadcasting House was then at Savoy Hill and I shall never forget my first impressions.

Because I was nervous I was reluctant to play solos, so I played Beethoven's *Kreutzer Sonata* with the young violinist Harry Blech. I was most impressed by the courtesy, kindness and peace. I was careful to drink some water for fear of coughing and to remove my ivory necklace lest it should rattle! Since that morning I have broadcast on and off for many years and keep a book of Broadcasting House containing many interesting photographs and autographs.

Nothing has given me such satisfaction and pleasure as my recitals for the BBC, which does so much to help artists, both young and established, besides giving pleasure to millions. People often imagine the lack of an audience and applause must worry me. This is not so. There is no audience in one's own music-room and one just plays for the love of music. The greater the silence the better one can concentrate. Although I have played all my life before an audience, I am nervous and dislike being *looked at*. A piano recital is a great mental and physical strain, which is added to by having hundreds of pairs of eyes focused upon one. Give me the peace and seclusion of the BBC! It does not matter there if one frowns, or smiles, or hardens one's mouth in a stupendous octave passage. If one's dress is unbecoming or hair untidy it still does not matter. And one can relax and straighten one's back during brief intervals. On the concert platform one must be gracious and conventional from beginning to end.

I found the increasing number of BBC engagements and my teaching in London meant a tiring journey from Herne Bay once or twice a week, and when Denis found a house at Shere I decided upon another move. I have always loved villages and this one was destined to give me more friends and more music.

Finale

The residents of Herne Bay, in my experience, lived only for bridge—for the rest, I found them unmusical and inartistic. For that reason I was glad to leave. Among my friends was a Mrs Ives and her daughter Pearl. Pearl was a good pianist, and as her mother was going to Canada, Pearl came to me as a resident pupil. The wife of my landlord was an excellent violinist and had heard me broadcast. We played sonatas together and she told me she played in the Guildford Symphony Concerts. As I wanted to teach she suggested I should get in touch with the Principal of the Guildford School of Music, Mr Claud Powell. He had often heard me play in my early days and invited me to become one of his professors. We also arranged that I should organize students' fortnightly concerts on the lines of my Clara Schumann days and the *Ubungsabende* in Frankfurt.

I went home very excited and began arrangements for these Saturday afternoon concerts. It was a happy day when I began teaching at the school, but happier still when Claud Powell persuaded me to play a concerto again.

'I want you to play the *Bach D Minor* at St Albans,' he said one day.

I knew, of course, of the orchestral concerts he was running in Hertfordshire towns.

'I am afraid that is quite impossible.' Subconsciously I dug my toes in, remembering Landon and my disaster.

'But why?' Claud Powell looked surprised.

Then out came the whole story. In the end he convinced me that to play from music is no crime; he reasoned with me kindly but firmly.

It is the beauty of the composer's creation which one must express and interpret to the audience. If one is less nervous and more confident with the music, that is all to the good. There is too much stress on showing off one's playing, although,

personally, I do prefer to play from memory for I can shut my eyes and concentrate absolutely on my fingers. But in certain concertos, or when I play Bach, I feel safer with the music, and I have learnt my lesson. •

I was very grateful to Claud Powell for helping me to get back into concerto playing. The St Albans concert gave me confidence and the Bach went splendidly. Claud Powell was delighted, and so was I, for once more I was playing with an orchestra.

Things did not go well for me financially while I was at Shere, and for some reason the place depressed me, just as Guildford did when I visited it. The house was too large and expensive. I had two more moves, first to a small house in Capel then later to Woking. Capel proved even worse than Shere. The house had won a *Daily Mail* prize for its design, but had no electricity, gas or drainage. One had to go across two fields and over three stiles to get to it! It was so lonely in winter that Toby began to suffer from black depressions. I became quite desperate; then one day my companion said:

‘Why not go to Woking?’

‘Woking! Why, that’s the place with a few houses round a crematorium, isn’t it?’

I was reminded of the days when Sir Henry Thompson had founded the crematorium, and met with so much opposition.

Then one day my companion returned from a visit to Woking and told me that she had ‘found me a house’. I rushed off to see it and discovered that it was one of a row of six ungainly, ugly houses, with a small garden.

‘Well?’ they all queried on my return.

‘It is impossible. I can’t endure the house, and I won’t live in Woking!’

This fierce outburst was received in silence. But I took the house, and I did live in Woking, simply because as time passed

Finale

I could find nothing else. Pearl, who had left me, returned and I tried to make the best of the ugliness of my surroundings. Soon I discovered that my "terrace" was the one and only blot on the countryside. In exploring, I found the golf course and the lovely countryside and at half-past five every morning, after a mile walk, I was on the golf links. It was, and still is, to me a paradise.

Finding such loveliness, in spite of my ugly house, made me feel happier. Pearl became my housekeeper and friend, and my worries left me. Once again I could concentrate on music.



Dame Ethel Smyth, Eileen Joyce and Others

IT SEEMED I had at last come "home". I made more friends in Woking than anywhere else since my childhood days in Birmingham.

Claud Powell bought me a "practice" from a teacher in Woking who was giving up. I was following in the footsteps of a popular young teacher and felt quite a responsibility. Although there were one or two grown-ups, most of my pupils were children, and they had been well taught. I had my first experience in coaching for the Associated Board Examinations, which was new to me. My teaching in Woking became a branch of the Guildford School of Music as I was a professor of the school, and for twelve years I gave over a thousand lessons a year.

I had already discovered that Lady Betty Balfour and her husband were living in Hook Heath, also our outstanding woman composer, Dame Ethel Smyth. I was anxious to be recognized by such people, and when later it was suggested I played at a concert, I readily agreed.

I was also eager to be well received by the Woking residents, with the result that my nervousness increased as the evening approached. I chose for my solos Brahms, Schumann and Chopin. The concert room was full and I knew that Lady Betty

Finale

and Dame Ethel were among the audience. There was applause when I went on the platform, and after the first number, Schumann's *Nachtstück in F Major*, as I struck the last chord very pianissimo, a loud 'Bravo!' boomed out in the deep voice I was to know well in after years. The second was a Schumann piece, followed by the great *Scherzo in E Flat Minor* of Brahms. The applause and cheers were heart-warming. When I came off I was told that the 'Bravo!' came from Dame Ethel Smyth. The audience, of course, took the cue from her and I was "made" that night as far as Woking was concerned. After my second group of solos, which included Chopin's *Ballade in G Minor*, Lady Betty Balfour invited me to sit by her during the other items. Dame Ethel had left after my first group. From that night until her death Lady Betty was my friend and patron. She never failed me, and every time I gave a concert in Woking, she worked hard to make it a success.

Soon after that concert the residents began to call on me. I was invited to tea by Lord and Lady Balfour and it was a red-letter day for me. They lived in a beautiful house called "Fisher's Hill" and entertained little. I found only the family and Dame Ethel Smyth present. Lord Balfour's sister, Mrs Henry Sidgewick, who was Principal of Newnham College, Cambridge, from 1892-1910, lived with them. She was the widow of Henry Sidgewick, Professor of Mental and Moral Science at Cambridge. He was an eminent educationalist, devoting himself to the cause of women's education. Later Lord Balfour and Mrs Sidgewick proposed and seconded me as a Member of the Psychical Research Society, in which I was then interested.

The first time I lunched with the Balfours I was asked to play. I gave them Bach, Brahms, Schumann and finally the *Thirty-two Variations* of Beethoven. Again I heard the deep clear 'Bravo!' of Dame Ethel in one of the *Variations* in which there is a run

diminuendo right down the keyboard as the music enters the slow and *pianissimo Variation*.

After I had finished Dame Ethel came over to me.

‘You should be in London,’ she said.

I explained as best I could that I was not well off, and must earn regular money. I pointed out that the profession of a soloist was precarious and as I was getting old I felt I could not undertake long concert tours, and that, as I had played since I was six, I was not sorry to turn to teaching. I could not mention that Toby needed more and more care and attention.

‘Can I do anything for you? Do let me help in some way—would it be any use if I wrote to the *Surrey Press* for you?’

Dame Ethel’s interest was warm and sincere. I could not sleep that night for her kindness. Of course I accepted her offer and the article subsequently appeared, expressed in the most encouraging manner. In it Dame Ethel compared me to Toscanini and ended:

‘Whatever my opinion may be worth, this is, word for word, what I said to myself about Madame de Lara’s playing: there is a bigness, a simplicity, a mastery, an utterly musical reading that only a combination of two things can bring about—a superb schooling and what in religion is called a “vocation”. The blessed respect for her art that reveals itself at every turn, and which impresses me even more than the pianistic qualities she possesses in such large measure; the fine rich touch, the knack of welding into one the various regions of the piano, the beauty, the ease, the smoothness, the command of style. I confess I don’t like to think of such ripe mastery being spent on teaching children, but that is a question for her to decide. Meanwhile I wish to say that there is absolutely no one to whom I would rather confide the training of any really intelligent, serious, and aspiring talent than Madame de Lara.’

Finale

This article did me a world of good in the Surrey district. I began to have a big following and was kept very busy one way and the other. After a few months, I arranged my first students' concert in the house of a Dr and Mrs Lawrie. After the concert, at which I also played, we had tea in the beautiful grounds and the whole affair went well. The press gave us very good notices.

It was not long after this that the Hon. Mrs Dudley Ryder wrote and asked me to go to London and hear a young girl who had been discovered in Australia by Percy Grainger and Backhaus, and who had been sent to Leipzig to study under Teichmüller and Max Pauer and finally brought to England by Mr and Mrs Andreac to make her début. She was an attractive, simple child, dressed in a plain little linen frock, and very unsophisticated, but when I heard her play I realized at once that she was brilliant. She had a wonderful technique and great confidence. When Mrs Ryder saw me alone afterwards she asked me if I would have this girl to live with me, to look after her and "mother" her, the idea being to help her to continue her study of her classical repertoire. Of course I was delighted to have so gifted a pupil. That girl was Eileen Joyce.

Soon after our meeting she made her first appearance at the Proms with Sir Henry Wood, playing Prokofiev's *Concerto* magnificently. She received a tremendous ovation and looked really lovely in a picture frock which Mrs Ryder had bought for her. After that Eileen came to me and, apart from her musical ability, I quickly became very fond of her personally. Mrs Ryder made a very satisfactory financial arrangement with me to have Eileen, and also helped her considerably. Eileen was lucky in having such a real friend. I know that I am grateful for what friends did for me, and am sure that Eileen Joyce must also be. We broadcast together on two or three occasions. A memorable night was on an August Bank Holiday when we

played Mozart's *Concerto in E Flat*, at No. 10 Studio by the Thames. The BBC Orchestra was conducted by the late Percy Pitt and we thoroughly enjoyed ourselves. Lady Betty also gave a musical party at which we played on two pianos. It was on a Saturday afternoon and Eileen and I played the Brahms-Haydn *Variations* and the Weber-Corder *Invitation to the Dance*. Always when we played together we were in complete sympathy and balanced perfectly. I should love to have played even more with her, and also to have toured, but she became world-famous and toured everywhere. I was getting older and had too many ties.

I was very sorry when the time came for Eileen to leave me, but naturally, as she played more in public, London was the place in which she should live. Our childhood was, in many ways, similar. I feel, as I see her now, that she is still the same child I knew, with her simple charm and lack of all conceit or vanity. She is always like that—she never grows up. Like her playing, she is radiant and scintillating. I hope she will have a youthful and successful old age. To talk to her, one would never believe she has astonished most of the world; that she has travelled as she has, and plays as she does, throwing off great concertos before enormous audiences as if they were mere trifles, yet playing them magnificently, with flawless technique and a masculine power surpassed by no one. I admire her as a woman tremendously, and her technique is supreme. In the early days it seemed to me that her playing, naturally, lacked maturity. Remembering the words of Clara Schumann to me as a girl, I felt that perhaps it was because she had not yet suffered. Whatever the reason, she certainly plays with feeling and maturity now.

Soon after Eileen's departure a great sorrow came to me. We were playing cards. Toby put down his hand—for some reason

Finale

my heart stood still. Every card was black. I looked across at him and saw he was terribly white:

'Toby, is anything the matter?'

'No,' he smiled a little strangely; then added, 'but I think I will go and lie down for a while.'

Within forty-eight hours he had passed away. I felt his death terribly, for although by then he had become a habit, part of my life ever since I was twenty-four, he had influenced me more than anyone has ever done. Trying though I found his temperament, he had been a staunch friend, although at times he had made me suffer more than anybody else. I feel things too acutely at the time, but get over them rapidly. Denis came to me immediately and remained for about a year. His presence helped me a great deal. Pearl proved a good friend, and Eileen immediately came to comfort me. Lady Betty and Dame Ethel rallied around; they had by now become my closest friends.

The years passed; I worked hard at my teaching, broadcasts and concerts. Then, in 1934, Claud Powell asked me to play for him at the Guildford Symphony Concerts. We chose Beethoven's *C Minor Concerto*, which I played on 15th November of that year. The concert was very successful and we were both gratified. I was also deeply grateful to him for having enabled me to resume concerto work. I suggested, one day, that he should give orchestral concerts in Woking, and offered to organize them for him, much to his delight. This was a big undertaking and I procured Julia, Marchioness of Tweeddale, the Balfours and Dame Ethel as patrons. The Guildford Orchestra was augmented by several London professionals and the success of the first proved that there was sufficient interest to justify the venture. At this I played the Beethoven *Emperor Concerto* and the César Franck *Symphonic Variations*.

At one of the Woking Orchestral Concerts Dame Ethel

conducted a work of hers for me. It was, I believe, the very last time she ever conducted. She came to see me the next morning to ask how I was after the night before. It was bitterly cold, freezing hard, with snow on the ground. She walked both ways with her dogs.

'I shall never conduct again,' she announced briefly, and at my concern she added, 'I was smiling sweetly at the First Clarinet, and he smiled back, but he little knew that my deafness made him sound like a cat on the tiles!'

That was the form her deafness took. I knew it had been troubling her but little realized to what extent. How tragic it was for a great musician to be forced to hear her own work in a completely distorted form.



A Broken Ankle and Another War

THE next years were heavy ones. I played with Claud Powell frequently at Woking, Guildford, St Albans, Windsor and other towns. My broadcasting gave me a huge unseen audience and I received fan-mail from all over the world. Pearl was offered a wonderful job, and though I was sorry to lose her, I felt I could not stand in her way. Her mother, Mrs Ives, had returned from Canada and came to me instead of Pearl, but she did no secretarial work. This meant more and more desk work for me and not quite so much playing. One cold December morning I decided to give Truda Ives as a surprise—an early cup of tea. I went to rake out the boiler, carried the ashes outside, slipped on the frozen top step and hurtled into space! There Truda found me, with a broken ankle, and back, head and body bruises. For a short period I was in hospital and then for sixteen weeks my leg was in plaster and for six months I had to live downstairs. Lady Betty gave me a wheelchair in which I was pushed to my lessons when I began to work again.

So numerous were my visitors that the front door had to be left open with a notice: "Madame's door second on the right." I wished I could charge for admission and earn an income!

WIGMORE HALL

Tuesday
June 15
at 7.30

LAST PUBLIC
CONCERT



ADELINA DE LARA

SCHUMANN

Request Programme

HERS & TILLET LTD

I gave my last public
concert on the 15th June
1954 in the Wigmore Hall.

Right: In 1944 I was invited to give a talk on Clara Schumann in the BBC programme *Music Magazine*. *Below:* A photograph taken ten years later during one of my appearances on Television.



When Dame Ethel came to visit me a small bottle of champagne stuck out of each of her pockets!.

Out of my enforced idleness came one good thing. I taught myself, on Dame Ethel's advice, how to score for string orchestra; but I would not touch woodwind. For a long time I had had ideas for a piano concerto; then one night as I lay in bed unable to sleep, three complete movements were blazing in my head. It kept me awake all night, and early the next morning I started scoring. It was laborious work, I wrote it over and over again. From then on I worked and worked whenever I was not teaching. The days were not long enough. When it had really progressed I told Claud Powell about it and he asked Dr Thomas Dunhill to come down and help me. He was wonderfully kind and came down on two Sundays to spend the day working with me. When we played it together on two pianos he was very pleased with the result; in fact, plans were made for me to play it at the Aeolian Hall with Claud Powell and his String Orchestra. It gave me an added incentive during the painful process of learning to walk again. I attended a clinic and, with tears streaming down my face, tried to do as the nurses told me; but it was worth it, for within a year my leg and foot were quite normal. For a time, of course, I needed two sticks, then only one, finally none, and soon I was out for my usual walks as if the accident had never been.

I was able to play my concerto at the Aeolian Hall. My feelings were very mixed: I am always nervous when I play, and this time I was playing my own concerto and had double cause for anxiety. I felt quite sick beforehand, but it was a great success. *The Times* and the *Daily Telegraph* praised it and I played it again at the Guildford Symphony Concerts. Stainer and Bell accepted it for publication. After this they accepted fresh works of mine, *In the Forest*, first performed at Guildford, then an arrangement

Finale

of ten small pieces of Schumann, which I named the *Schumann Suite*. Then came my second piano concerto, the *Symphonic Dance Fantasy*, a work in three movements. The following is written on the copy of the score »

SYMPHONIC DANCE FANTASY

for Piano and Strings

By *Adelina de Lara*

1. *Prelude* 2. *Dawn* 3. *The Dance*

The Fantasy is intended to express the romance of a young girl's first dance.

Prelude: *Describes anticipation, pomp and circumstance, the delights of the approaching festivity, with suggestions of the dance music.*

Dawn: *Suggests the opening of the auspicious day; the girl listens to the song of birds, the rustle of leaves, the gentle sounds which herald the dawn. Her heart is filled with joy and love at the thought of whom she will meet at the dance.*

The Dance: *Speaks for itself. The girl arrives, hears strains of the music; meeting with her lover who leads her to the Ballroom, where they join the dancers . . .*

I gave a Benefit Concert at Woking and played this work with the string section of the Guildford Symphony Orchestra.

All this time rumours of war were gathering. Too quickly things came to a head! September 1939, and war was declared. My heart went cold. Denis was called up on the first day, as he held a commission in the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve. For him, it was Dunkirk, the Battle of Britain, Malta and Gibraltar,

and he was awarded the Air Efficiency Decoration, the Atlantic Star, and mentioned three times in despatches. Alan had been invalided out of the Air Force with the loss of an eye four months before the war; it was a tragedy for him, as he had 3,000 hours' flying time and was a fine Spitfire pilot. He became an officer in the Home Guard and also worked in a secret aircraft factory.

Once again I found myself in another war, with both my sons involved and my age then sixty-seven. After the first dreadful nightmare days I turned to organizing War Fund Concerts. I had the chance of a lovely cottage with a garden in Woking, and as Mrs Ives had to leave, I took it and moved in with my half-brother, who had come to live with me. From my garden I watched the glow of London's fires, and in the cottage I heard the planes fly over, bent upon destruction, but I was unharmed when they dropped bombs at the bottom of my garden. Through all the terror I went on with concerts—Trefor Jones sang for me, Kathleen Riddick conducted the London Women's String Orchestra in Woking in aid of the Red Cross, and the Queen bought tickets. Lady Betty and Dame Ethel constantly visited me and Claud Powell's mother came to stay with me for a year.

Soon after this I was shocked and saddened by the sudden passing of Lady Betty Balfour, after only a three days' illness. A short time before she had called in to see me and I gave her tea and played her Schumann. I walked up the lane with her, and she kissed me goodbye—it was the last time I was to see her. I have missed her friendship more than I can say, and musically, too, she was a terrible loss. All the concerts I ever gave during my Woking days had her help and backing; her name always topped the list of distinguished patrons. Not only that, we had so much in common. Over the years I have been searching for truth. The talks I had with Lady Betty, one of the most saintly and brilliant women I have ever known, were often of religion and had helped me

Finale

form my views. I have been an ardent Theosophist, a Christian Scientist—I had left the Catholic Church, but still have a love and respect for it. I have always believed in Reincarnation.

I arranged a recital in Woking as a tribute to her and the proceeds were handed to her favourite charity, the Caldecot Community. Adila Fachiri came and played two Beethoven Violin Sonatas with me. Lady Betty's brother, the Earl of Lytton, gave an address; his son, Lord Knebworth, had just been killed—the second of his sons to die in the war. I was more than touched by Lord Lytton's appearance and his moving words. Dame Ethel did not attend the concert because of her deafness, but took seats and then sat in my dressing-room.

Once again I threw myself into many activities, not the least of which was the presentation I arranged for Claud Powell. We all wished to celebrate his 150th concert in Guildford, and the encouragement he had given to British composers and British music. I also initiated a petition to the Prime Minister for recognition of his work in the Honours List. An appeal to Bernard Shaw brought forth this note to cheer me:

Ayot St Lawrence,
Welwyn,
Herts.

Dear Adelina de Lara,

I never patronize anybody; and at 87 it is too late to begin. But if at any time a letter to the Prime Minister advising a knighthood or a Civil List pension for C.P. is drafted I shall be glad to be one of its signatories. How pleasant to learn that you still are as active as ever.

G. BERNARD SHAW

The petition took a long time, but in due course resulted in an O.B.E.

Then into my life came two more sad bereavements. First Sir Herbert Thompson, surely one of my kindest, gentlest and most loyal of friends. From the time I was thirteen up to the age of seventy-two he had never failed me. Of late we had not seen each other much, but we had kept in touch by letter. I told him about my musical work, and everything else I did. He loved to hear of my concerts and broadcasts. He remained Victorian to the last; he never used the telephone, and never had a wireless set. He did listen to me once when I was broadcasting the Bach *Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue*. He could never understand the Overseas Broadcasts and only a short time before his death, when I was giving a recital to Latin-America from Aldenham House Studio, Hertfordshire at two o'clock in the morning, wrote:

'I am very concerned that you should have to play at that hour, it is preposterous of the BBC, expecting you to get up in the middle of the night and give a recital like that.'

He did not realize all the organization of such an engagement and that the BBC arranged for my hotel, car and so on. In fact he would always send a substantial cheque, begging me to give myself some "extra comforts". After his death *The Times* and other papers wrote wonderful things about his work. He was considered the greatest Coptic scholar in the world.

My next great sorrow was the passing of Dame Ethel. One would not, perhaps, have wished her to remain longer, for her deafness was so acute that it must have been a misery to her. In the end one had to write everything on a tablet. Her last visit to me had been to bring a cheque for Claud Powell's presentation. I saw her hand-in-hand with her companion, for her sight was going too.

'I would not post this for I wanted to put it into your own hand. It is for the presentation to Claud Powell. Now I know it is safe.' Saying this, she came towards me, her face alight with happiness.

Finale

The last time I visited her we sat in her garden for two hours. She flooded me with questions: 'Tell me about Brahms; give me your impressions.' 'Did Clara Schumann ever get angry while teaching?'

She thrust the tablet and pencil into my hands, and looked anxiously at me while I wrote. I did so want to talk and talk, for she was intensely interested in everything. From music we would turn to dogs—hers and mine. We each thought our own the most wonderful, and certainly her sheepdog was a splendid animal. So with the use of the tablet we held that last conversation; and then another valued friend went out of my life.

I wrote a tribute to her in the *Woking News and Mail* of 19th May, 1944. It is long and I will not quote it all, but I began:

'It is a privilege to be allowed, by courtesy of the *Woking News and Mail*, to express my admiration and esteem for my valued friend and patron, Dame Ethel Smyth, who has passed from our sight into a greater freedom of life.

'Much has been written and said about Ethel Smyth; everyone knows she was the greatest woman musician in the world, an erudite authoress and profound scholar. Many tales are told of her witticisms and little eccentricities—all know of her love for golf and tennis, for fresh air and animals, also of her interest in the Woman's Suffrage Movement. I doubt, however, if many realize the generous nature she possessed and the tender heart with a great sympathy for all who suffered. . . '

I finished on the words of Claud Powell, who had asked to add his to mine: 'One of the few great ones left has passed on and we shall sadly miss an outstandingly gracious and courteous personality.'

I organised a concert in Woking as a personal tribute to her. Marjorie Hayward and I played her *Violin Sonata*. The original

manuscript of this work was presented to me by members of her family. The concert was in aid of the R.S.P.C.A., which I felt to be appropriate, for we were both sincere animal-lovers. Dr Thomas Dunhill gave a beautiful address about Dame Ethel's work; then I played Beethoven and Schumann which she loved so much. Roger Quilter accompanied some of his songs sung by Betty St Leger. It was, I think, a concert after Dame Ethel's own heart, and who knows, perhaps that time she could hear it?



I Play with Dame Myra Hess

MOURNING the passing of so many friends, I turned my mind more and more to the comfort of music. My next recital in Woking was in aid of the Servers of the Blind. At the end a nurse led a blind girl on to the platform and she gave me a bouquet. I took her hand and kissed her. At times like this one realizes one's own good fortune. She could not see the blossoms she handed me, but I was thankful she could not see either the tears in my eyes.

All this time, of course, the air raids had to be endured, and the terrible V.1's and V.2's. I was sleeping badly, and our nights were disturbed, but I knew I was in paradise compared to those in London. I was thankful, all the same, that I was too old for fire-watching! One great pleasure was an engagement to give a talk, with piano illustrations, on my impressions of Clara Schumann, for the BBC. They sent down Cedric Wallis to interview and help me. I was very much afraid, although excited by the idea, of my voice going out to millions.

I had one rehearsal the day before, and Anna Instone gave me advice and help until I think I satisfied the critics. Sunday morning arrived and I found myself in front of the microphone and piano; at the age of seventy-two I gained a new experience! I finished my

talk by playing the delightful little *Elf* by Schumann, which Denis calls my signature tune. Alec Robertson amused me by telling "the millions" that when he had performed it in his youth it sounded more like an elephant than a fairy!

Next I was engaged to broadcast the Schumann Concerto, conducted by Sir Adrian Boult. Thus, I met him for the first time, for I had never played under his direction. When I entered the Corn Exchange at Bedford for the rehearsal and saw him conducting the huge and very fine BBC Orchestra, I felt like a young student who was about to play a concerto for the first time. Sir Adrian came down from the rostrum to greet me, and no one could have been more charming. When I sat down to the piano he quickly set me at ease and everything went well so that at the actual broadcast I was quite happy. Since then I have always hoped to play with him again.

The following January, 1945, I gave a lecture with illustrations on Clara Schumann's teaching, before the Society of Women Musicians. It was a memorable afternoon for me. The lecture room was so packed that many people sat on the floor and around the piano, and even outside on the staircase. I was very moved by the reception, and Dr Thomas Dunhill opened the discussion. Perhaps I will not be considered vain if I quote the following remark of his:

'Unfortunately Clara Schumann is no longer with us, but we have got Adelina de Lara, and I would strongly advise those who make records to invite her speedily to make as many Schumann records as possible, before it is too late, so that the tradition can remain with us.'

I did feel rather as if he were killing me off—but dear kind Dr Dunhill is no longer with us. I am still here—and have now made many recordings. I finished my lecture about a quarter past four and most of the audience had gone on to the Sesame Club

Finale

where we were to have tea. Suddenly there was the most head-splitting crash and the building seemed to rock.

'Whatever is that?' I cried out, covering my face with my hands. 'Will there be more?'

'It's all over now', answered someone. 'It's a V.2 'down in the street.'

It was my first experience of the habits of these weapons.

The following October I gave the same lecture at a girls' school, Oak Hall, in Haslemere. I felt timid at facing so many girls, for schoolgirls can be very critical, but Miss Keyte-Perry, the Headmistress, received me kindly, and I enjoyed a very heartening reception from the students as she led me on to the platform. I made a few alterations in my original script which, by request of the Society of Women Musicians, had been presented to them for their archives. I played the great *Carnaval* at the end and was cheered until I nearly broke down with emotion. It is a very moving feeling, at my age, to be enthusiastically acclaimed by young people. As for Miss Keyte-Perry, her kindness and appreciation that day, which she expressed again so movingly at my very last concert, is a continued wonder to me. It has brought something very beautiful into my life.

'On the 10th November of that grand year of peace, I broadcast a recital to Latin-America from Hertfordshire at half past one in the morning. Denis and I drove to Aldenham and got back at four. Quite an achievement for a woman of seventy-two, I could not help but tell myself, for the same day I gave a Schumann recital for the Society of Women Musicians. During this time I had found a friend in Miss Eva Ducat, another fine musician, whose book, *Another Way of Music*, is full of interest. She was a pupil of Mimi Shakespeare, who was also a pupil of Clara Schumann. Miss Ducat engaged me to give recitals at her house in Holland Park and after fifty years I met again Ilona

Eibenschütz, whom I had first known in Clara Schumann's house.

Recently she and I gave a private two-piano recital at Eva Ducat's house; one of the works we played was the Saint-Saëns *Beethoven Variations*, and I think this must be a record, for we had last played it together in 1891 during our student days. Neither of us had played it with any other pianist since, nor did we have a rehearsal. Everyone gasped and said it was "a magnificent performance". Of course we went straight through it without a break. Anthony Asquith, who was among the guests, said we ought to be put in a film together! Ilona is a great artist, and Brahms, up to the time of his death, thought the world of her. When she visited him in Vienna they played his works to each other. She was also the means of bringing Brahms and Clara Schumann together again after a sad misunderstanding. With her permission I quote the following letter, translated into English, from Clara to Brahms:

'So, dear Johann, let us resume our friendship for which your new *Klavierstücke* (about which Ilona has written me) affords the best opportunity, if you are willing. Accept my greetings in the old affectionate way,

From your

CLARA

Ilona is, in private life, Mrs Carl Derenburg. Her husband was a violinist and an enthusiastic musician. It was a sad loss to the concert platform when she retired, if only for her great knowledge of the Brahms tradition—her interpretation of his works should certainly be recorded. I secretly think this applies to my own privately recorded renderings of the works of Schumann. I cannot ignore the years of experience and knowledge; it would be mere affectation for me to do so.

I am nearing the end of my memories, yet still have to record

Finale

one of the most satisfying events of my life. Many years ago Clara Schumann requested me to give a performance in London of the original version of Schumann's *Variations* for two pianos. They were always played on two pianos only, but Schumann added two 'cellos and horn. I still have the programme of the concert which I arranged at the Steinway Hall, London. It occurred to me that Dame Myra Hess might be interested in the idea of having the work performed at her National Gallery concerts, which have been such a wonderful consolation and spiritual help for thousands of war-weary people. I therefore wrote to her and to my delight received the following letter from this very great pianist:

London,
8th March, 1945

Dear Adeliņa de Lara,

What a lovely idea! I would be honoured and proud to play the Schumann *Variations* with you at the National Gallery. We have always wanted to play them in their original form—but have never been able to arrange it.

Would you perhaps give a Schumann programme for us—beginning and finishing the concert with solos and having the *Variations* in the middle . . .

Thank you again for wanting to do the *Variations* with me. It will be an historic occasion.

Yours with warmest regards,
MYRA HESS

Owing to Dame Myra Hess's engagements the original date had to be postponed. However, I heard again from her, suggesting we should play the work with the other instrumental artists on my seventy-fourth birthday. I was to make up the rest of the programme as first arranged. We met in London to have a rehearsal and lunch together. I found Dame Myra one of the most lovable

of women. I shall never forget the kindness I have received from her—my only regret is that I was seventy-four before I met her for the first time. Like other geniuses, she is modest about her abilities; in fact, as we played, she might have been the young student—I the world-famous star! We had no trouble at all, just played as one, and both loved it.

The day before the concert we all met and had the usual rehearsal, and were joined by Irene Scharrer, who came to listen. I had often seen her years before at the house of my aunt Russell. She was unique among pianists for being so lovely to look at, for in those days pianists were rarely attractive.

The rehearsal went well, and the next day, 23rd January, 1946, and my birthday, found me in the artists' room of the National Gallery. Dame Myra received me, kissing me, as she handed me a glorious posy of flowers.

The National Gallery was packed and it was one of the most inspiring concerts in which I have ever taken part. To be associated with one of the greatest musicians, and to be surrounded—in the form of a huge cross—by that vast audience, was an experience I shall never forget. The silence of the listeners was wonderful to me. It was a cold rainy day, I was playing alone for thirty-three minutes the Schumann *Fantasy*, *Op.* 17, and not a sound or a cough could be heard except between the movements. After the lovely *Variations* which I played with Dame Myra and the other artists, there was much enthusiasm. Dame Myra quickly asked me if she might reveal my age, and of course I consented. In a charming little speech she then told the audience that 'they were celebrating my seventy-fourth birthday'. I felt honoured as she held my hand amid the applause, and I was very happy.

After this concert I received a letter from the Lady-in-Waiting to the Queen Mother, in which she said: 'Her Majesty was so interested to hear that you have been playing with Dame Myra

Finale

Hess and knows what a joy it must have been to the audience . . . I have been privileged to have had seventeen letters from Her Majesty during my career! My heart will always go out to Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, who through the years of my long career has never failed to send me, through her ladies-in-waiting, her kind wishes and to show interest in my work. The same applies to Queen Mary. Both Queens have accepted at times my compositions, and even sent kind messages about my health.

Almost without noticing it I began to play in London more and more; it was almost as if I had never stopped. In February and March of the same year I gave three Schumann Recitals at the Wigmore Hall. At them I played seven of Schumann's greatest and longest works, as well as, with encores, twenty-one small pieces. Out of these programmes, four of the biggest works were played from music, the rest from memory. I think if one is a little nervous or not quite safe in one's memory, it is too foolish to risk the awful mental strain of memorising before an audience. One must not play to show off technique, but for a love of music, the perfect interpretation of the composer's meaning.

July found me busy broadcasting—a Sunday concert and then Schumann on the Third Programme. I love playing on the Third Programme for there is an unhurried and serene atmosphere. I feel on another plane when I broadcast—alone, yet not alone. As I play I have always a strong sense of the presence of those no longer with us—particularly of Clara and Robert Schumann. Now that I play only their music, I feel convinced that they are pleased.

Winter that year was particularly hard; but having arranged a recital at the Wigmore Hall I had to get down to practising. It was no easy task! The electricity used to be turned off everywhere with the thermometer at freezing point. I could not feel my fingers any more! Wrapped in a fur coat and woollen gloves, I struggled to practise my Schumann programme. The cold went on and on,

the inadequate diet of the post-war period began to tell, and I finally collapsed. I had to postpone the recital until July. The very word "July" sounded warmer. For the time being I resigned myself to burst pipes, snow, and a good deal of depression. Windsor suffered badly and the Theatre Royal where I had played at the Symphony Concerts had sixteen feet of water. The repairs cost a large sum, and in April Claud Powell asked me if I would join Léon Goossens in a Schumann Recital for a series of Celebrity Recitals in aid of the flood expenses. Of course I agreed, and on 4th May, after I had given another broadcast in the Home Service, I took part. When I think of the heartbreak Robert Schumann had to suffer over some of his works during his lifetime, it is comforting to me to know how greatly they have become appreciated recently. Léon Goossens played superbly; it was a joy to me to hear him.

Shortly after this concert I had an invitation from Dora Bright, whom I had not seen for fifty years, to stay with her in Somerset. I happened to write to the critic of *Musical Opinion* to thank him for a good notice of one of my Schumann recitals. To my surprise Dora Bright answered, for she was the critic! She invited me to a house party to meet Ilona Eibenschütz and Herbert Walen. Unfortunately I was unable to go, but in June 1947 a friend drove me to Dora Bright's lovely home, Babington. Dora Bright in private life is Mrs Knatchbull and became a widow forty years ago. As we drove into the great park, with its lake and the church built by Wren, my heart quickened. The sight of the house made me gasp. Some parts of it date from the thirteenth century and it contains twenty-five bedrooms, of which one is called James II's bedroom. King James' saddle, a dull rose in colour, and his watch are kept in a large glass case in the room. My own bedroom was enormous, with a huge four-poster, but the peaceful view from the tall windows was comforting and uplifting. I found Dora

Finale

Bright delightful. So youthful, too, for her years. I think there were quite six Grand pianos in the house and her music-room might have belonged to Buckingham Palace.

I played Schumann to Dora each evening after dinner, and to talk to her was a joy. Best of all were the duets we played together on two pianos, and Dora's playing of her own compositions.

A short time after this visit I broadcast again in the Home Service. I was to play at ten forty in the evening, and I arranged to dine at Broadcasting House. I rested until my "balance" test, and for those who do not know what this is, I will explain. I went to the piano, just as if I were in my own room, and played anything I felt like; sometimes one runs through the coming recital—it rather depends on one's mood. Meanwhile the electricians just come in and out, doing all sorts of weird things—quite incomprehensible to the ordinary person. They fiddle with wires, cables and microphones, while I fiddle with the keyboard—then they leave me. I relax and stare at the piano, then at the clock, which looks as if it had come from Mars and fascinates me. I then play some of my beloved Schumann and ponder upon the coming recital. The hands of the clock draw nearer the hour, the door opens, my announcer enters. We shake hands, we exchange a few pleasantries, then he goes to the table, I to my piano. I think of the days of long ago when I was awaiting my turn for a lesson with Clara Schumann—that excited feeling of anticipation—my heart begins to thump in exactly the same manner. I look at the clock—the announcer looks at the clock—our eyes meet—the moment has come. 'Silence, please'—the red light appears. 'This is the BBC Home Service—etc., etc.' My heart decides to turn a somersault, but with my first notes it steadies itself and troubles me no more. I am "away" over the ether, lost to my surrounding and happy in the moment.

My postponed Schumann recital took place at the Wigmore

Hall in July 1947, and once again I found great pleasure in going through the programme. I played for about two hours with encores. Lord Howard de Walden was patron in place of his father, who had just died, and he presented me with a beautiful bouquet. I made a little speech, for I really did feel this must be my last public appearance. I nearly cried and heard someone crying in the audience. But the tears were wasted; before long I was playing again at Worthing at a concert with Bratza and other artists. After this I really knew I must ease up, for the present-day living conditions, with work to do at home, as well as my music, were causing a great weariness in me which I could not ignore. The doctor warned me to take things quietly. It was hard at first, but I knew it was wise at my age.

However, in the New Year all my old vigour seemed to return. I turned a deaf ear to all suggestions that I should retire or continue to rest. The BBC suggested I should do a session of recordings of Schumann, and in the spring I went to Broadcasting House to discuss the matter. I decided upon forty pieces for the records, most of them short. As no composer has written so many short pieces as Schumann, all of which I play, I was determined upon a good programme.

I gave twenty-six hours one week-end to timing the pieces with a stopwatch and arranged them into three sessions.

It was most interesting. I was all alone in the concert room, and after each solo I heard myself in the control room. Since then I have been able to sit in my own room and listen to myself on the wireless! Nothing pleases me more. I never can realize it is myself—it sounds to me more like a man, for I have a very firm touch and know I play with much energy, thanks to my "school". When a record of a Schumann work is announced now by the BBC without the name of the pianist, it is more than likely to be a record I have made.

Finale

I sit and criticize myself something like this: 'I should have held back a little there' or 'Get a move on'—and sometimes I pat myself on the back, as was the case when I heard myself play the Paganini *Étude in A Minor*. The speed and brilliancy of my scales at the beginning and end of that difficult study, which really came over well, made me feel that Clara Schumann would have been pleased. This sounds most vain, but I do not mean it to be. I "judge" my own performance as objectively as I can.

In June I broadcast in the Third Programme the *Humoreske* of Schumann, and it was recorded during the transmission. Again I felt that wonderful, almost unreal atmosphere of the Third Programme, silence—no sense of time—no hurry. When later I was staying with Mrs Du Pre I made some more Schumann recordings. I played again with Ilona Eibenschütz two-piano works by Schumann and Brahms. When I went to tea with my hostess and Ilona at Eva Ducat's, they all seemed very touched. Presumably one does not often see two fellow students of long ago playing together at the age of seventy-six!

I arranged with my agents, Ibbs & Tillett, to give another recital at the Wigmore Hall in 1949. The success of this led to yet another new experience for me. In a short musical film for the Parthian Company (for the States) I was to play a great deal, and at once I began rehearsing. The film itself was about my student days. They compiled it from the details I gave them of the dresses worn, Madame Schumann's home, and everything else. I think the scene I loved best was of one of the parties with Clara Schumann and Brahms present, with a young actress as myself, at the piano. I was playing most of the time and the end of the film showed me as I am, playing the *Traumerei* by Schumann.

In spite of my age I was working from eight in the morning until nine at night on the last day, with very short breaks, but I felt remarkably fresh at the end! But the memories it revived

I Play with Dame Myra Hess

made me realize that, as I had been playing from the age of six, life would become empty indeed if I had to stop. Perhaps these words written by Annie Swann expressed my frame of mind just then: •

*God give me work
Till my life shall end;
And life
Till my work is done.*

In 1951, however, I was prevailed upon to retire. After I made this foolish decision I gave a farewell recital at the Wigmore Hall, which was recorded. It was, I think, a great success with a most sympathetic audience. Later I appeared on television and talked of my coming retirement, and as the winter proved very trying I tried to convince myself that I would not play again, in spite of the fact that television had won me hundreds of new friends and I heard from people from all parts of the world. Then came the spring! All my good resolutions disappeared—I could not keep my piano closed; it would have broken my heart.

The tempting offer to record the Schumann Concerto for a broadcast to the world from Glasgow, was my final undoing. On the 29th May at eight in the morning a car called for me and I set off through counties I thought I would never see again. Staffordshire, where at six I gave my first concert; Lake Windermere, where we stayed the night. Spring was at its loveliest—birds were singing, buds were bursting—everywhere was new life, and I felt new life too! I even passed through Carlisle, where I was born.

Once in Glasgow I spent the whole day at Broadcasting House, where I met Ian Whyte, director of the BBC Scottish Orchestra. To be, at the BBC once again—I felt happy and excited. After my broadcast—Schumann's *Concerto*, conducted by Ian Whyte—to the world, I was photographed and gave a recorded talk to Scotland—more photographs and interviews.

Finale

Tired but happy, I left Glasgow on that lovely spring evening and spent the night at a beautiful hotel on the moors. When, next morning, we started the five-hundred-mile drive back to Woking, I knew I could not stop my music. Having been given a talent, while I am fit and well I know it is my duty to go on, if it gives pleasure to others. Having reached this decision I settled down to enjoy the drive back, to concerts and still more concerts, and my beloved BBC.



Farewell

‘AN INVESTITURE is to be held on——’

One who has not taken part realizes the excitement and splendour they imply. Since I had the honour of being commanded in 1951 to attend, I feel I would like to share my experiences. To begin with, never, in so short a time, have I seen so many beautiful things. Although I had visited the Private Apartments at Windsor Castle, I was a “visitor” being taken round (I had a permit from the Master of the Queen’s Musick). At the Investiture in 1951 I was an honoured guest, receiving the award of an Officer of the Order of the British Empire.

Driving through the entrance of Buckingham Palace I was received by the Gentlemen-at-Arms. As I mounted the Grand Stairway and was passed from room to room I was overwhelmed by the beauty of everything around me. Wherever I looked, wherever I went, pictures, the priceless china, carpets and chandeliers ablaze with light, made me feel I had entered an unreal world. There was quite a long walk to a very large and magnificent room. Here others were waiting; hundreds of men but only fifteen women, and I soon found myself chatting to the Mayor of Southampton.

Finale

After a very long wait we were all told what was expected of us during the actual Investiture; then came the final instruction:

'Ladies and Gentlemen, take your order of going into the presence of His Royal Highness.'

The Duke of Gloucester was holding the Investiture, for it was when King George VI was seriously ill.

Although the Investiture had been going on for a long time, when we took our places we walked slowly forward, with long intervals of waiting. I was perfectly content to look at everything around me, and was particularly fascinated by a picture of Charles I. At last we drew near to the White and Gold Ballroom and could hear the Guards' Band, playing softly in the gallery. Soon the floodlit dais came into view and I could see the Duke of Gloucester, and behind him, motionless, the Ycomen of the Guard—I do not think even their eyes moved! One by one our names were called; except for that, there was silence. Besides those who were being invested, there was what I, as a professional, would call a large audience, all seated, but never a cough or a rustle.

Suddenly I realized the Mayor of Southampton had gone forward. I was next! When my name rang out, my heart beat more violently. The dais was on my left, with the Duke in the centre. Slowly I went forward, mounted the four steps, made the front curtsy, then stepped towards H.R.H. as I had been directed. He looked serious as he pinned on my Order, then as he held out his hand, I looked straight into his face and I know I smiled; suddenly he gave me a kind smile and shook my hand. I curtsied, backed four steps and curtsied again, then walked from the Ballroom. The ordeal was over!

In the next room my Order was unpinned, put into its case, and I was free to find my way back through more rooms, more corridors to the Great Stairway.

'Adelina in Buckingham Palace—Alice in Wonderland!'

I almost expected to see the White Rabbit! It had been a long journey from the Waxworks Gallery in Liverpool.

I rejoined the chattering crowd in the Entrance Hall—nobody seemed to be leaving yet. Quite suddenly there was silence again as in the distance came the tramp of the Yeomen of the Guard. Across the top of the stairway they passed and along the gallery followed officers and others of the retinue. Then came the Duke of Gloucester, more officers—and more Yeomen. The Investiture was over.

Soon I found my friends and away we went to a champagne lunch and afterwards, where else but to the London Musical Club in Holland Park, of which I am President, and which was founded by a fine musician, Adela Hamaton, whom I have known for many years. Its object is to enable young artists to give recitals and make themselves known. Often Miss Hamaton has allowed me to give musical afternoons there to aid my work for the Animals' Societies. Her own work is never-ending: teaching, encouraging, helping other artists, giving recitals; for the past twenty-three years she has never spared herself. To me she has been a very good friend. The Club was overrun with the Press—cameras clicked and everyone wanted to see my Order. I was asked by a member of the Press a very difficult question:

‘What experience has given you the greatest thrill in your life?’

My answer then, of course, was the elation I felt at that Investiture.

I had still not experienced the greatest day in my life—my farewell to all piano recitals and solo playing after seventy-six years! How different it was to my first appearance in St James' Hall, even though Joachim was there to give me courage. Then my future depended upon success or failure—the terror of it is vivid with me even now; but this, my last appearance in public, on Tuesday, 15th June, 1954, at half past seven in the friendly Wigmore Hall,

Finale

was so different. Of course in a way, it was tinged with sadness, but on the other hand I felt an elation, and joy to think that all the years I had played and worked were at an end at last.

As usual, I lay awake listening to the birds, and with my waking flooded over me a feeling of gratitude to God, Who has looked after me for so long. I have always enjoyed the hour of dawn; it is the hour of peace and resolution; and the day of my farewell concert began as every other day. I had nothing to fear. I knew I was playing better than ever before—I knew the hall would be filled with an atmosphere of affection and sympathy.

The amazing number of letters I had been receiving daily with good wishes from strangers as well as from friends did much to lift me to the heights. I needed nothing more to carry me through the day. I was overwhelmed with gratitude, and I loved life better than ever.

In my cottage on the edge of a wood the morning passed. I cooked my own lunch as I have done so many times before, and I fed my spaniel.

Of the recital itself, I can only say it exceeded all my longing and expectations. The programme from beginning to end was "by request", a joy alone to give, for one knows it is exactly what the audience wants to hear. Because it is my last programme I have given it in full. (See illustration facing page 192.)

A sheaf of telegrams in my dressing-room greeted me. Among them two special ones I shall always treasure. One came from Dame Myra Hess, the other from Sir Adrian Boult. The Queen Mother conveyed her good wishes, which H.M. graciously permitted me to read aloud.

When I appeared upon the platform I was met by a warmth of response which came to me as a wave. I threw my heart, mind and physical energy into my playing that evening. I forgot it was my last recital; I just played for the love of playing Schumann's music.

The audience became a dream and I could feel Clara Schumann, Fanny Davies and Lady Thompson near me—even Schumann himself seemed to be close, and listening to his great compositions. I am no pianist; I never consider myself a pianist. I see things in music which I want to express, and to pass on. I heard again Clara Schumann's constant cry: 'Vision—vision!' Well, I like to think I have at last acquired it, and I hope I have passed it on to those who listened. For me it was a memorable occasion; the Blüthner piano responded to all my thoughts—and at the end, the flowers came in great waves as the applause which overwhelmed me. •

The Times reported that among the distinguished audience Lord Kenswood, the blind musical peer, with Lady Kenswood, came from South Wales—they visited me during the interval. It was a gesture that warmed my heart. There were many well-known musicians present, including Eileen Joyce, who afterwards came to the party given for me by Mr and Mrs Worman, of Ibbs & Tillet. There was so much to say, so many to talk to.

Dawn was breaking as I drove up to my cottage. I was too happy to feel tired, and my house was full of flowers. Some I sent to friends who were ill, so that they could also share in my farewell concert.

Whereas my last appearance in public gave me happiness tinged with sadness, another farewell was a very different matter. Always I have stressed my great appreciation of the BBC. I fancy no other artist can have enjoyed playing there and appreciated the peaceful atmosphere more than I have. My feelings have never altered, and it was, I confess, with a very great sorrow that I played on the air for the last time. For this occasion, I chose the work I love best, Schumann's *Kreisleriana*. I had chosen to broadcast my last notes in public for the BBC, and to me it was something very precious and very painful.

Tears were very near as I played this long and lovely work,

Finale

with its glorious calm, peaceful and inspiring harmonies, with its passion, and sometimes, anger. The last movement, *Butterflies*, and the very last phrase when they flit down the keyboard, is softer and softer till the last note, *D—G* pianissimo—the *end*. And so the finale brought me to the end of a long playing career, and to the last of my farewells. But although it is farewell to my playing, I still have much to live for. I can give my “talks” and try to pass on the knowledge I have gained. .

Recorded extracts of my life have already been to Australia, coupled with recordings of Schumann’s work; and now I have more time to help young concert pianists in their interpretations of the classics. I hope to get some of my scores, such as my two-piano concertos, publicly performed and published. There is so much to do—and life is very full.

List of Recordings

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- MM 361 "Clara Schumann and Her Teaching"
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- MM 363 *Romance in B flat minor, Op. 28*
364 *Träumerei, Op. 15*
- MM 365 *Carnaval, Op. 9*
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- MM 367 „
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- MM 369 „
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- MM 371 *Novelette in D (No. 2), Op. 21*
372 *Novelette in D (contd.)*
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MX/17323-4	(Speaker). Introduction before playing <i>Piano Concerto in A minor.</i>	2'29"	29.5.51
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11660	<i>Op. 15, No. 7, Träumerei from Kinderszenen by Schumann.</i>	1'57"	„
11662	<i>Op. 23, Nachtstück in F—Schumann.</i>	3'50"	„
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11661	Op. 72, <i>Fugue in D minor</i> — Schumann.	2' 24"	
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11662	Op. 124, <i>Ländler No. 7</i> from <i>Albumblätter</i> by Schumann.	0' 45"	„
11660	Op. 124, No. 17, <i>Elfe</i> from <i>Albumblätter</i> .	0' 45"	„
11660'	Op. 124, No. 18, <i>Botschaft</i> , <i>from Albumblätter</i> .	0' 57"	„
<hr/>			
16216-8	Talk on Clara Schumann as a teacher.	22' 25"	24.5.51

These recordings are only available for purposes other than broad-
casting under very exceptional circumstances.

[continued from front page]

a pupil of Clara Schumann and heard, learned and inherited from her the now almost lost and perhaps irrecoverable "authentic" way of playing her husband's compositions. To pin that manner down is impossible, for if it were communicable in words, it would have been still more easily communicable by demonstration and would have been transmitted to a younger generation. What impressed most were the predominance of the melody, the rhythmic precision, and the lightness, the gaiety, the silvery brilliance of the sound.'

For young and old, the early Savoy Hill days of the BBC are made to live, and from then onwards Madame de Lara became a constant broadcaster. It was on the anniversary of Schumann's birthday in 1951 that she gave a world broadcast of the Schumann Concerto with the BBC Scottish Orchestra.

Her poignant description of her farewell concert with the BBC gives us an insight of how greatly she valued this medium of making known to the world the beauty of Schumann's music, a medium which 'Clara Schumann never dreamed of, for furthering her husband's work.'

Now, although Madame de Lara's public playing appearances are over, she still continues to make recordings and to talk and lecture for the BBC.

Many millions of viewers will recollect with pleasure her appearance and playing on BBC television on her 80th and 82nd birthdays, an experience she hopes shortly to repeat.

On the Ballet

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